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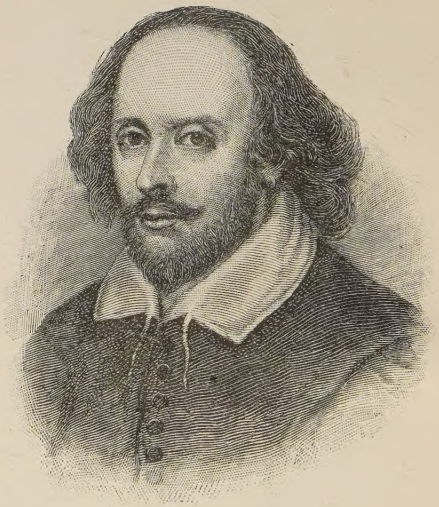

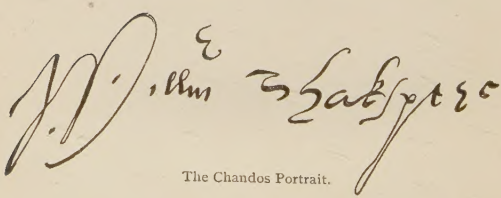

The Chandos Portrait.

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SHAKESPEARE'S MERCHANT OF VENICE

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND CLASSES

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL

BY THE

REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.

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GENERAL PREFACE.

ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS.

WHY should English Literature be taught in our schools? and, What is the best way of teaching it? These are the questions which I propose to discuss.

As preliminary to such discussion, it will, I think, be rightly in place to consider, briefly, what our people are aiming to prepare their children for, and what sort of an education it is the proper business of the school to give; that is to say, what form of mind and character, and what disposition of the faculties, it is meant to impress.

Now I take it that a vast majority of the pupils in our schools are not to pass their life as students or as authors. Their main business in this world is to gain an honest living for themselves and for those dependent on them. And no plan of education is just that leaves this prime consideration behind, in quest of any alleged higher aims: for there really are no higher aims; and all pretence of such is a delusion and a snare. Some men, it is true, do more than gain an honest living; but this is the *best* thing that any man does; as, on the other hand, shining intellectually is the poorest thing that any man does, or can possibly learn to do. Then too most of the pupils in our schools, ninety-nine hundredths of them at the least, are to get their living by hand-work, not by head-work; and what they need is, to have their heads

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so armed and furnished as to guard their hand-work against error and loss, and to guide it to the most productive means and methods. And, for gaining an honest living by hand-work, the largest and best part of their education is not to be had in school; it must be got somewhere else, or not at all. The right place, the only right place, for learning the trade of a farmer or a mechanic is on the farm or in the shop. For instance, Mr. Edward Burnett's "Deerfoot Farm," in Southborough, Massachusetts, is, I undertake to say, a better school for learning agriculture than any "agricultural college" is likely to be. There is no practicable, nay, no possible way of acquiring the use of tools but by actually handling them, and working with them. And this rule holds equally true in all the walks of life, — holds as true of the lawyer, the physician, the merchant, as of the shoemaker, the bricklayer, the machinist, the blacksmith.

On this point, our people generally, at least a very large portion of them, have their notions all wrong side up: their ideas and expectations in the matter are literally preposterous. How the thing came to be so, it were bootless to inquire; but so it clearly is. Parents, with us, are manifestly supposing that it is the business of the school to give their children all the education needful for gaining an honest living; that their boys and girls ought to come from the school-teachers' hands fully armed and equipped for engaging, intelligently and successfully, in all sorts of work, whether of head or of hand. And they are evermore complaining and finding fault because this is not done; that their children, after all, have only learnt how to use books, if indeed they have learnt that, and know no more how to use tools, are no better fitted to make or procure food and clothes, than if they had spent so much time in stark idleness or in sleep.

But the fault is in themselves, not in the school; their expectations on this head being altogether unreasonable, and such as the school cannot possibly answer. That, say what you please, is the plain English of the matter; and it may as well be spoken.

I repeat that, with very few exceptions, and those mostly applicable to girls, the most and the best that the school can do, or can reasonably be expected to do, is to educate the mind and the heart: as for the education of their children's hands, parents must, yes, *must* look for this elsewhere: probably their best way is to take it into their own immediate care, and hold themselves religiously bound to attend to it. Possibly, withal, some parents, as also some who drive the trade of idealizing about education, may need to be taught, or warned, that unless the school have something ready made to its hand, unless the pupil bring to it something inside his skull, it cannot educate his mind: brains it cannot furnish; though it is often blamed for not doing this too. And, good as vocal intelligence may be, yet, for all the practical ends, and even the dignities, of life, manual intelligence is vastly better: this it is that makes both the artist and the artisan; and without this the former, however it may prattle and glitter, can neither plough the field nor reap the corn, neither tan the leather nor make the shoe, neither shape the brick nor build the wall, neither grind the flour nor bake the bread.

But I suspect our American parents have become somewhat absurdly, and not very innocently, ambitious of having their boys and girls all educated to be gentlemen and ladies; which is, I take it, the same in effect as having them educated to be good for nothing; too proud or too lazy to live by hand-work, while they are nowise qualified to live by

head-work, nor could get any to do, if they were. And so they insist on having their children taught how to do something, perhaps several things, without ever soiling their fingers by actually doing any thing. If they would, in all meekness and simplicity of heart, endeavour to educate their children to be good for something, they would be infinitely more likely to overtake the aim of their sinful and stupid ambition. The man who has been well and rightly educated to earn, and does earn, a fair living by true and solid service, he is a gentleman in the only sense in which it is not both a sin and a shame to be called by that title. Any form of honest service, however plain and humble, has manliness in it, and is therefore a higher style of gentility, and a sounder basis of self-respect, than any, even the proudest, form of mere social ornamentation. The dull boy, who cannot prate science, but can drive a cart as a cart ought to be driven, or the dull girl who cannot finger a piano, but can rightly broil a beef-steak, is, in the eye of all true taste, a far more sightly and attractive object than the most learned and accomplished good-for-nothing in the world. I have seen men calling themselves doctors, who, week after week, month after month, year after year, were going about making sham calls on bogus patients, that so they might either get themselves a practice or make men believe they had got one ; and have thought that the poorest drudge, who honestly ate his bread, or what little he could get, in the sweat of his face, was a prince in comparison with them. An aristocratic idler or trifler or spendthrift or clothes-frame, however strong he may smell of the school and the college, of books and of lingual culture, is no better than a vulgar illiterate loafer ; nor can his smart clothes and his perfumes and his lily hands and his fashionable airs shield him from the just contempt of thoughtful men and sensible women.

Now so long as people proceed upon the notion that their children's main business in this world is to shine, and not to work, and that the school has it in special charge to fit them out at all points for a self-supporting and reputable career in life; just so long they will continue to expect and demand of the school that which the school cannot give; to grumble and find fault because it fails to do what they wish; and to insist on having its methods changed till their preposterous demands are satisfied. On the other hand, the school could do its proper work much better, if people would but come down, or rather come up, to a just conception of what that work is. But it must needs fail, in a greater or less degree, to do that part of education which falls within its legitimate province, while struggling and beating about in a vain endeavour to combine this with that part which fairly lies outside of its province. For, in straining to hit the impossible, we are pretty sure to miss the possible. And all experienced teachers know right well that those parents who faithfully do their own part in the education of their children are most apt to be satisfied with what the school is doing.

It is, then, desirable that children should learn to think, but it is indispensable that they should learn to work; and I believe it is possible for a large, perhaps the larger, portion of them to be so educated as to find pleasure in both. But the great question is, how to render the desirable thing and the indispensable thing mutually helpful and supplementary. For, surely, the two parts of education, the education of the mind and the education of the hand, though quite distinct in idea, and separate in act, are not, or need not be, at all antagonistic. On the contrary, the school can, and should, so do its part as to coöperate with and further that part which lies beyond its province. And it is both the

office and the aim of a wise benevolence in teachers so to deal with the boys under their care as to make them, if possible, intelligent, thoughtful, sober-minded men, with hearts set and tuned to such services and such pleasures as reason and religion approve; also, to make them prudent, upright, patriotic citizens, with heads so stocked and tempered as not to be "cajoled and driven about in herds" by greedy, ambitious, unprincipled demagogues, and the political gamesters of the day. And here it is to be noted, withal, that any man who gains an honest living for himself, whether lettered or unlettered, is a good citizen in the right sense of the term; and that human slugs and do-nothings, however book-learned they may be, are not good citizens.

As for the women, let it suffice that their rights and interests in this matter are coördinate with those of the men; just that, and no more. Their main business, also, is to get an honest living. And the education that unprepares them or leaves them unprepared for this is the height of folly and of wrong. And I hope the most of them are not going to turn students or authors by profession, nor to aim at eating their bread in the sweat of the brain. For things have already come to that pass with us, that any fool can write a book: the great difficulty is in finding people who know enough and have strength enough not to attempt it.

And here let me say that the greatest institution in the world is the family; worth all the others put together, and the foundation of them all. So, again, the greatest art known among men is housekeeping, which is the life of the family. For what are we poor mortals good for, in head, heart, hand, or any thing else, without healthy, eupeptic stomachs? and how are we to have such stomachs without good cooking? So that I reckon housekeeping to be just

the last thing that any *lady* can afford to be ignorant of. The finest accomplishment too that woman was ever beautified with. This part of woman's education, also, is to be gained at home; it cannot be gained anywhere else. As for those young ladies who are above going into the kitchen, and learning this great art by actually working at it, my advice is, that they forthwith migrate to a world where the home and the family have no place, and where babies are not to be born and nursed.

Our girls in school, then, should, first of all, be fashioned for intelligent, thoughtful, sober-minded women; with souls attempered and attuned to the honest and ennobling delectations of the fireside; their heads furnished and disposed to be prudent, skillful, dutiful wives and mothers and housekeepers; home-loving and home-staying; formed for steady loves, serene attachments, quiet virtues, and the whole flock of household pieties; all suited to the office of

> A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food.

The love of home, and the art of making home lovely, must be mainly acquired in the works and enjoyments of home; and the best thing that the school can do is to coöperate with the home to that end.

But the most important item in this account, and that which is the main subject of what I have to say, is yet to come.

We have reached a stage of civilization and general culture in which both the virtue and the happiness of people depend very much on their intellectual forming and furnishing. And as this holds true alike of both sexes, so both will be included alike in the scope of what I have in mind to

speak further. Books, of one sort or another, are now, on every hand, a common resort for entertainment and pleasure, and are likely to become more and more so. Wealth has greatly accumulated; machinery has come to do a large part of our work; and all sorts of people have more or less of leisure on their hands. This leisure ought not to be spent in idleness, neither will it be. In the vacancy of their hands people's thoughts will needs be busy either for the better or for the worse: if their minds are not dressed for the abode of the Deity, they will be workshops of the Devil. And reading does in fact bear a large part in filling up such vacant time.

Now the world is getting full of devils, very potent ones too, in the shape of foolish and bad books. And I am apt to think the foolish devils in that shape even worse than the wicked: for they only begin the work of evil somewhat further off, so as to come at it the more surely; and a slow creeping infection is more dangerous than a frank assault. Nothing so bad here as that which eludes or seduces the moral sentinels of the heart. I am not exactly a believer in the old doctrine of total depravity; but I fear it must be confessed that the greater number of people take much more readily to that which is false and bad than to that which is good and true. Certainly what intoxicates and lowers stands a better chance with them than what sobers and elevates. Virtue and wisdom are an up-hill road, where they do not advance without some effort; folly and vice a down-hill path, where it requires some effort not to advance. And this is quite as true in intellectual matters as in moral. Here, to most people, delight in what is false and bad comes spontaneously; delight in what is true and good is the slow result of discipline and care, and grows by postponement of impulse to law.

I suspect it has been taken for granted much too generally, that if people know how to read they will be apt enough to make good use of that knowledge without further concern. A very great mistake ! This faculty is quite as liable to abuse as any other : probably there is none other more sadly abused at this very time ; none that needs to be more carefully fenced about with the safeguards of judgment and taste. Through this faculty crowds of our young people are let into the society of such things as can only degrade and corrupt, and, to a great extent, are positively drawn away from the fellowship of such as would elevate and correct. Most, probably not less than seven-eighths, of the books now read are simply a discipline of debasement ; ministering fierce stimulants and provocatives to the lower propensities, and habituating the thoughts to the mud and slime of literary cesspools and slop-cooks.

I have indeed no faith in the policy or the efficacy of attempting to squelch these springs of evil by forcible sequestration, or to keep people from eating this poor devil-soup by muzzling them. If they will take to it, probably the best way is to let them have it ; perhaps it is best to act somewhat on the plan of glutting them with it, in the hope that so they may outgrow it : but something might well be essayed so to fit and prepare them as that they may not take to it, and may even turn away from it with disgust when it comes to them. Surely, at all events, the education that delivers people over to such feeding is a very doubtful good.

In view of all which, it is clearly of the highest consequence, that from their early youth people should have their minds so bent and disposed as to find pleasure in such books as are adapted to purify and raise. I say *pleasure*, because we cannot rely, neither ought we, on arguments of right in

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this matter. Reading even good books without pleasure, and merely from a sense of duty, is of little benefit, and may even do hurt, by breeding insensibly an aversion to what is good, and by investing it with irksome associations. A genial delight in that which is good is what sets the colours of it in the mind: without this, the mind grows at odds with it. People cannot be droned or bored into virtue; and if evil were made as tedious to them as good often is, I suspect their hearts would soon be weaned from ugliness, and won to a marriage with beauty. And the pith of my argument is, that it is what people take pleasure in that really shapes and determines their characters. So experience has taught me that the characters of students in college are influenced far more by their reading than by their studies. From the books they take to you may judge at once whither their spirits are tending, and what they are inwardly made of, because here they generally go by free choice and pleasure. In brief, they study what they must; they read what they love; and their souls are and will be in the keeping of their loves. Even the breath of excellence is apt to be lost, if it be not waited on by delight; while, to love worthy objects, and in a worthy manner, is the top and crown of earthly good, ay, and of heavenly good also. Considering how clear and evident all this is, that so little is done, even in our highest seats of learning, to form the tastes and guide the reading of students, may well be matter of grief and astonishment. I have long wondered at it, and often sickened over it.

Now, to fence against the growing pestilence of foolish and bad books, I know of but one way; and that is by endeavouring systematically so to familiarize the young with the best and purest mental preparations, and so to prepossess them with the culture of that which is wholesome and good,

that they may have an honest, hearty relish for it. The thing is, to plant the mind full of such loves, and so to set and form the intellectual tastes and habits, that the vicious and false will be spontaneously refused, and the healthy and true be freely preferred; this too, not from any novelty in it, but for the experienced sweetness and beauty of it, and for the quiet joy that goes in company with it.

Let the efficacy of a very few good books be seasonably steeped into the mind, and then, in the matter of their reading, people will be apt to go right of their own accord; and assuredly they will never be got to go right except of their own accord. You may thus hope to predispose and attune the faculties of choice to what is noble and sweet, before the springs of choice are vitiated by evil or ignorant conversations. If people have their tastes set betimes to such authors as Spenser and Shakespeare, Addison, Scott, Wordsworth, and Charles Lamb, is it likely that they will stomach such foul stuff as the literary slums and grog-shops of the day are teeming with? I hope it is not so, and I will not readily believe it can be so. Nor can I see any impracticability, any insuperable difficulty here. Instances of native dulness or perversity there will indeed be, such as no soul-music can penetrate: but that, as a general thing, young minds, yet undeflowered by the sensational flash and fury of vulgar book-makers, will be found proof against the might and sweetness of that which is intellectually beautiful and good, provided they be held in communication with it long enough for its virtue to penetrate them, is what I will not, must not, believe, without a fairer trial than has yet been made.

In reference to the foregoing points, a well-chosen and well-used course of study in the best English classics seems

the most eligible and most effective preparation. Whether to the ends of practical use or of rational pleasure, this cannot but be the right line of early mental culture. The direct aids and inspirations of religion excepted, what better nursery can there be of just thoughts and healthy tastes? what more apt to train and feed the mind for the common duties, interests, affections, and enjoyments of life? For the very process here stands in framing and disposing the mind for intercourse with the sayings of the wise, with the gathered treasures of light and joy, and with the meanings and beauties of Nature as seen by the eye, and interpreted by the pen, of genius and wisdom.

We are getting sadly estranged from right ideas as to the nature and scope of literary workmanship. For literature, in its proper character, is nowise a something standing outside of and apart from the practical service of life; a sort of moonshine world, where the working understanding sleeps for the idle fancy to dream. This is no doubt true in regard to most of the books now read; which are indeed no books, but mere devils and dunces in books' clothing; but it is not at all true of books that are books indeed. These draw right into the substance and pith of actual things; the matter of them is "labour'd and distill'd through all the needful uses of our lives"; the soul of their purpose is to arm and strengthen the head, and to inspire and direct the hand, for productive work. That an author brings us face to face with real men and things, and helps us to see them as they are; that he furnishes us with enablements for conversing rationally, and for wrestling effectively, with the problems of living, operative truth; that he ministers guidance and support for thinking nobly and working bravely in the services, through the perils, under the difficulties and adversities of our state,

— this is the test and measure of his worth ; this is the sole basis of his claim to rank as a classic. This, to be sure, is not always done directly, neither ought it to be ; for the helps that touch our uses more or less indirectly often serve us best, because they call for and naturally prompt our own mental and moral coöperation in turning them to practical account.

It is such literature that the poet has in view when he tells us, —

> books, we know,
> Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
> Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
> Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
>
> And books are yours,
> Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
> Preserved from age to age; more precious far
> Than that accumulated store of gold
> And orient gems which, for a day of need,
> The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs:
> These hoards you can unlock at will.

Nor is it the least benefit of such authors that they reconcile and combine utility with pleasure, making each ministrative to the other ; so that the grace of pleasant thoughts becomes the sweeter for their usefulness, and the virtue of working thoughts the more telling for their pleasantness ; the two thus pulling and rejoicing together. For so the right order of mental action is where delight pays tribute to use, and use to delight ; and there is no worse corruption of literature in the long run than where these are divorced, and made to pull in different lines. Such pleasure is itself uplifting, because it goes hand in hand with duty. And as life, with its inevitable wants and cares and toils, is apt to be hard enough at the best with most of us, there is need of all the assuage-

ments and alleviations that can come from this harmonizing process. Pressed as we are with heavy laws, happy indeed is he

> Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
> Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

Next to a good conscience and the aids of Christian faith, there is no stronger support under the burdens of our lot than the companionship of such refreshing and soul-lifting thoughts as spring up by the wayside of duty, from our being at home with the approved interpreters of Nature and truth. This is indeed to carry with us in our working hours a power

> That beautifies the fairest shore,
> And mitigates the harshest clime.

Now I do not like to hear it said that our school-education can do nothing towards this result. I believe, nay, I am sure, it can do much; though I have to admit that it has done and is doing far less than it might. I fear it may even be said that our course is rather operating as a hindrance than as a help in this respect. What sort of reading are our schools planting an appetite for? Are they really doing any thing to instruct and form the mental taste, so that the pupils on leaving them may be safely left to choose their reading for themselves? It is clear in evidence that they are far from educating the young to take pleasure in what is intellectually noble and sweet. The statistics of our public libraries show that some cause is working mightily to prepare them only for delight in what is both morally and intellectually mean and foul. It would not indeed be fair to charge our public schools with positively giving this preparation; but it is their business to forestall and prevent such a result. If, along with the faculty of reading, they cannot also impart some safe-

guards of taste and habit against such a result, will the system prove a success?

As things now go, English literature is postponed to almost every thing else in our public schools: much as ever it can gain admission at all; and the most that can be got for it is merely such fag-ends of time as may possibly be spared from other studies. We think it a fine thing to have our children studying Demosthenes and Cicero; but do not mind having them left almost totally ignorant of Burke and Webster. Yet, in the matter of practical learning, ay, and of liberal learning too, for deep and comprehensive eloquence, for instruction in statesmanship, and in the principles of civil order and social well-being, Burke alone is worth more than all the oratory of Greece and Rome put together; albeit I am far from meaning to disrepute the latter. And a few of Webster's speeches, besides their treasure of noble English, — "a manly style fitted to manly ears," — have in them more that would come home to the business and bosoms of our best American intelligence, more that is suited to the ends of a well-instructed patriotism, than all that we have inherited from the lips of ancient orators.

So, again, we spare no cost to have our children delving in the suburbs and outskirts of Homer and Virgil; for not one in fifty of them ever gets beyond these; yet we take no pains to have them living in the heart of Shakespeare and Wordsworth: while there is in Shakespeare a richer fund of "sweetness and light," more and better food for the intellectual soul, a larger provision of such thoughts as should dwell together with the spirit of a man, and be twisted about his heart for ever, than in the collective poetry of the whole ancient heathen world.

It may indeed be said that these treasures are in a language

already known, and so are accessible to people without any special preparation; and that the school is meant to furnish the keys to such wealth as would else be locked up from them. But our public schools leave the pupils without any taste for those native treasures, or any aptitude to enjoy them: the course there pursued does almost nothing to fit and dispose the pupils for communing with the wisdom and beauty enshrined in our mother-tongue; while hardly any so master the Greek and Latin as to hold communion with the intellectual virtue which they enshrine. Few, very few, after all, can be trained to love Homer; while there are, I must think, comparatively few who cannot be trained to love Shakespeare; and the main thing is to plant that love. The point, then, is just here: Our schools are neither giving the pupils the key to the wisdom of Homer, nor disposing them to use the key to the wisdom of Shakespeare. And so the result is that, instead of bathing in the deep, clear streams of thought, ancient or modern, they have no taste but for waddling or wallowing in the shallow, turbid puddles of the time; —

> Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
> To enervate and defile.

It is a notorious fact that among our highly-educated people, the graduates of our colleges, really good English scholars are extremely rare. I suspect it is not too much to say that among our instructors there are at least twenty competent to teach Greek and Latin, where there is one competent to teach English literature. Very few indeed of them are really at home in the great masters of our native tongue, so as to make them matter of fruitful exercise in the class-room. They know not how to come at them, or to shape their course in teaching them. Their minds are so engrossed

with the verbal part of learning, that, unless they have a husk of words to stick in, as in studying a foreign tongue, they can hardly find where to stick at all.

This habit, I suppose, comes mainly as a tradition from a former age; a habit which, though begun upon good causes, has been kept up long after those causes were done away. The prevailing ideas herein got fixed at a time when there was no well-formed English literature in being; when the language itself was raw and rude; and when the world's whole stock of intellectual wealth was enshrined in other tongues. The custom thus settled from necessity is continued to this day, when the English tongue, besides its own vast fund of original treasure, has had the blood of all the best human thought transfused into its veins, and when its walks have grown rich and delectable with the spoils of every earlier fruitage of genius and learning.

Three centuries ago Chaucer was the only really good English author; he was then two hundred years old; and the language had changed so much since his time, that reading him was almost like studying a foreign tongue. So much was this the case, that Bacon thought the English was going to bankrupt all books entrusted to its keeping: he therefore took care to have most of his own works translated into Latin; and now our greatest regret touching him is, that we have not all those works in his own noble English. Before his time, the language changed more in fifty years than it has done in all the three hundred years since. This is no doubt because the mighty workmen of that age, himself among them, did so much to "bolt off change," by the vast treasures of thought and wisdom which they found or made the language capable of expressing. The work then so gloriously begun has been going on ever since, though not always with

the same grand results; until now the English is commonly held to be one of the richest and noblest tongues ever spoken, and the English literature is, in compass and variety of intellectual wealth, unsurpassed by any in the world.

How strange it is, then, that, with such immense riches at hand in our vernacular, we should so much postpone them to the springs that were resorted to before those riches grew into being! Because Homer and Sophocles had to be studied before Shakespeare wrote, why should Shakespeare still be ignored in our liberal education, when his mighty works have dwarfed Homer and Sophocles into infants? There might indeed be some reason in this, if he had been in any sort the offspring of those Greek masters: but he was blessedly ignorant of them; which may partly account for his having so much surpassed them. He did not conceive himself bound to think and write as they did; and this seems to have been one cause why he thought and wrote better than they did. I really can see no reason for insisting on learning from them rather than from him, except that learning from him is vastly easier.

Nevertheless I am far from thinking that the Greek and Latin ought to be disused or made little of in our course of *liberal* learning. On the contrary, I would, of the two, have them studied in college even more thoroughly than they commonly are; and this, not only because of their unequalled use in mental training and discipline, and as a preparation for solid merit and success in the learned professions, but also because a knowledge of them is so largely fundamental to a practical mastery of our own tongue. And here I am moved to note what seems to me a change for the worse within the last forty years. Forty years ago, besides that the Greek and Latin were made more of in college, at least

relatively, than they are now, the students had both more time for English studies, and also more of judicious prompting and guidance in their reading. But, of late, there has been so much crowding-in of modern languages and recent branches of science, that students have a good deal less time than formerly for cultivating English literature by themselves. In short, our colleges, it seems to me, did much more, forty years ago, towards setting and forming right literary and intellectual tastes than they are doing now. I believe they are now turning out fewer English scholars, and that these are not so well grounded and cultured in the riches of our native tongue. The fashion indeed has been growing upon us of educating the mouth much more than the mind; which seems to be one cause why we are having so many more talkers and writers than thinkers. An unappeasable itch of popularity is eating out the old love of solid learning, and the old relish for the haunts of the Muses.

It may have been observed, that in this argument I distinguish somewhat broadly between a liberal and a practical education. Our colleges ought to give, and, I suppose, aim at giving the former; while the latter is all that our public schools can justly be expected to give. And a large majority of the pupils, as I said before, are to gain their living by hand-work, not by head-work. But then we want them made capable of solid profit and of honest delight in the conversation of books; for this, as things now are, is essential both to their moral health and also to their highest success in work; to say nothing of their duties and interests as citizens of a republican State. And, to this end, what can be more practical, in the just sense of the term, than planting and nursing in them right intellectual tastes, so that their reading shall take to such books as are really wholesome and improving?

On the general subject, however, I have to remark further, that our education, as it seems to me, is greatly overworking the study of language, especially in the modern languages. From the way our young people are hurried into French and German, one would suppose there were no English authors worth knowing, nor any thought in the English tongue worth learning. So we cram them with words, and educate them into ignorance of things, and then exult in their being able to "speak no sense in several languages." Surely a portion of the time might be as innocently spent in learning something worth speaking in plain mother-English. When we add that, with all this wear and tear of brain, the pupils, ten to one, stick in the crust of words, and never get through into the marrow of thought, so as to be at home in it, our course can hardly be deemed the perfection of wisdom.

Our custom herein seems to involve some flagrant defect or error in our philosophy of education. The true process of education is to set and keep the mind in living intercourse with things: the works and ways of God in Nature are our true educators. And the right office of language is to serve as the medium of such intercourse. And so the secret of a good style in writing is, that words be used purely in their representative character, and not at all for their own sake. This is well illustrated in Shakespeare, who in his earlier plays used language partly for its own sake; but in his later plays all traces of such use disappear: here he uses it purely in its representative character. This it is, in great part, that makes his style so much at once the delight and the despair of those who now undertake to write the English tongue. And in other writers excellence of style is measured by approximation to this standard. This it is that so highly distinguishes Webster's style, — the best yet written on this

continent. His language is so transparent, that in reading him one seldom thinks of it, and can hardly see it. In fact, the proper character of his style is perfect, consummate manliness; in which quality I make bold to affirm that he has no superior in the whole range of English authorship. And in his *Autobiography* the great man touches the secret as to how this came about. "While in college," says he, "I delivered two or three occasional addresses, which were published. I trust they are forgotten: they were in very bad taste. I had not then learned that all true power in writing is in the idea, not in the style; an error into which the *Ars rhetorica*, as it is usually taught, may easily lead stronger heads than mine."

Hence it follows that language should be used and studied mainly in its representative character; that is, as a medium for conversing with things; and that studying it merely or even mainly for its own sake is a plain inversion of the right order. For words are of no use but as they bring us acquainted with the facts, objects, and relations of Nature in the world about us. The actual things and ideas which they stand for, or are the signs of, are what we ought to know and have commerce with. In our vernacular, words are, for the most part, naturally and unconsciously used in this way; except where a perverse system has got us into a habit of using them for their own sake; which is indeed the common bane of American authorship, making our style so intensely self-conscious, that an instructed taste soon tires of it. But, in studying a foreign tongue, the language itself is and has to be the *object* of thought. Probably not one in fifty of our college graduates learns to use the Greek and Latin freely as a medium of converse with things. Their whole mental force is spent on the words themselves; or, if

they go beyond these to the things signified, it is to help their understanding of the words.

I freely admit that language, even our own, ought to be, to some extent, an object of study; but only to the end of perfecting our use and mastery of it as a medium. So that the true end of mental action is missed, where language is advanced into an ultimate object of study; which is practically making the end subordinate to the means. Here, however, I am anxious not to be misunderstood, and lest I may seem to strain the point too far; for I know full well that in such a cause nothing is to be gained by breaches of fairness and candour. It is a question of relative measure and proportion. And I mean that our education treats language quite too much as an object of thought, and quite too little as a medium. Our students, it seems to me, are altogether too much brought up in "the alms-basket of words"; and of too many of them it may not unfairly be said, "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps."

I have said that our custom in this matter stands partly as a tradition from a long-past age when there was no English literature in being. But this does not wholly explain it. The thing proceeds in great part from a perverse vanity of going abroad and sporting foreign gear, unmindful of the good that lies nearer home. Hence boys and girls, especially the latter, are hurried into studying foreign languages before they have learnt to spell correctly or to read intelligibly in their own. I say girls especially, because, since the women set out to equal, perhaps to eclipse, the men in brain-power, a mighty ambition has invaded them to be flourishing their lingual intellectuality in our faces. Besides, the fashion now is to educate young women for any place rather than for

home. Most of them hope some time to spend six months travelling in Europe; and they think far more of preparing for that holiday than for all the working-day honours and services of life. And I fear it must be said withal, that we are the most apish people on the planet. I wish we may not prove "the *servum pecus* of a Gallic breed." Be that as it may, parents among us apparently hold it a much grander thing to have their children chopping Racine and Voltaire than conversing with the treasures of wisdom and beauty in our own tongue; as if smattering French words were better than understanding English and American things.

Thus our school education is growing to be very much a positive dispreparation for the proper cares, duties, interests, and delectations of life. The further a thing draws from any useful service or common occasion, the more pride there is in studying it. Whatever will serve best to prank up the mind for flaunting out its life away from home, that seems to be our first concern. To this end, we prefer something out of the common way; something that can be turned to no account, save to beguile a frivolous and fashionable leisure, or to mark people off from ordinary humanity, and wrap them up in the poor conceit of an aristocratic style. In short, we look upon the honest study of our honest mother-English as a vulgar thing; and it pleases us to forget that this squeamish turning-up of the nose at what is near and common is just the vulgarest thing in the world. Surely we cannot too soon wake up to the plain truth, that real honour and elevation, as well as solid profit, are to grow by conversing with the things that live and work about us, and by giving our studious hours to those masters of English thought from whom we may learn to read, soberly, modestly, and with clear intelligence, a few pages in the book of life.

The chief argument in support of the prevailing custom is, that the study of languages, especially the Greek and Latin, is highly serviceable as a mental gymnastic. No doubt it is so. But the study, as it is managed with us, may be not unfairly charged with inverting the true relative importance of mental gymnastic and mental diet. Formerly the Greek and Latin were held to be enough; but now, by adding three or four modern languages, we are making the linguistic element altogether too prominent. We thus give the mind little time for feeding, little matter to feed upon; and so keep it exercising when it ought to be feeding: for so the study of words has much exercise and little food. Now such an excess of activity is not favourable to healthy growth. Substituting stimulants for nourishment is as bad for the mind as for the body. Supply the mind with wholesome natural food; do all you can to tempt and awaken the appetite; and then trust somewhat to nature. True, some minds, do your best, will not eat; but, if they do not eat, then they ought not to act. For dulness, let me tell you, is not so bad as disease; and, from straining so hard to stimulate and force the mind into action without eating, nothing but disease can result. Depend upon it, there is something wrong with us here: food and exercise are not rightly proportioned in our method. In keeping the young mind so much on a stretch of activity, as if the mere exercise of its powers were to be sought for its own sake, we are at war with nature. And a feverish, restless, mischievous activity of mind is the natural consequence of such a course; unless, which is sometimes the case, the mental forces get dried into stiffness from mere heat of gymnastic stress.

We are now having quite too much of this diseased mental activity. Perhaps our greatest danger lies in a want of

mental repose. The chronic nervous intensity thus generated is eating the life out of us, and crushing the nobler energies of duty and virtue, ay, and of sound intelligence too. For, while we are thus overworking the mind, the muscular and nutritive systems of course suffer; so that, first we know, the mind itself gives out; and people go foolish or crazy from having been educated all into nerves. Composure is the right pulse of mental health, as it is also of moral; and "a heart that watches and receives" will gather more of wisdom than a head perpetually on the jump. We need "the harvest of a quiet eye," that feeds on the proportions of truth as she beams from the works of Nature and from the pages of Nature's high-priests. But now we must be in a giddy whirl of brain-excitement, else we are miserable, and think our mental faculties are in peril of stagnation. Of intellectual athletes we have more than enough; men, and women too, who think to renovate the world, and to immortalize themselves, by being in a continual rapture and tumult of brain-exercise; minds hopelesly disorbed from the calmness of reason, and held in a fever of activity from sheer lack of strength to sit still. It was such minds that Bacon had in view when he described man in a certain state as being "a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin." To be intellectual, to write books, to do wonders in mental pyrotechny, is not the chief end of man, nor can we make it so. This is indeed what we seem to be aiming at, but we shall fail; Nature will prove too strong for us here: and, if we persist, she will just smash us up, and replace us with a people not so tormentedly smart. It is to the meek, not the brilliant, that the possession of the Earth is promised.

My conclusion from the whole is, that, next to the elementary branches, and some parts of science, such as geography,

astronomy, and what is called natural philosophy, standard authors in English literature ought to have a place in our school education. Nor am I sure but that, instead of thus postponing the latter to science, it were still better to put them on an equal footing with it. For they draw quite as much into the practical currents of our American life as any studies properly scientific do; and, which is of yet higher regard, they have it in them to be much more effective in shaping the character. For they are the right school of harmonious culture as distinguished from mere formal knowledge; that is, they are a discipline of humanity: and to have the soul rightly alive to the difference between the noble and the base is better than understanding the laws of chemical affinity.

As to the best way of teaching English literature, I may speak the more briefly on this, inasmuch as a good deal to the point has been, I hope not obscurely, implied in the remarks already made.

In the first place, I am clear that only a few of the very best and fittest authors should be used; and that these should be used long enough, and in large enough portions, for the pupils to get really at home with them, and for the grace and efficacy of them to become thoroughly steeped into the mind. Bacon tells us that "some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." Of course it is only the latter that I deem worthy to be used in school. And I lay special stress on the pupil's coming at an author in such a way, and staying with him so long, as to study him with honest love and delight. This is what sets and fixes the taste. And this is a thing that cannot be extemporized: the process necessarily takes considerable time.

For wise men's thoughts are a presence to live in, to feed upon, and to grow into the likeness of. And the benefit of a right good book all depends upon this, that its virtue just *soak* into the mind, and there become a living, generative force.

Do you say that this shuts off from pupils the spur and charm of novelty? Yes, that it does, else I would not urge it. What I want first of all is to shut off the flashy, fugitive charm of novelty, so as to secure the solid, enduring charm of truth and beauty; for these are what it does the soul good to be charmed with, and to tie up in the society of, — the charm of a "concord that elevates and stills"; while the charm of novelty is but as "the crackling of thorns under a pot," — not the right music for soul-sweetening. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." And they know nothing of the genesis of the human affections, who have not learned that these thrive best in the society of old familiar faces. To be running and rambling over a great many books, tasting a little here, a little there, and tying up with none, is good for nothing in school; nay, worse than nothing. Such a process of "unceasing change" is also a discipline of "perpetual emptiness." It is as if a man should turn free-lover, and take to himself a new wife every week; in which case I suppose he would soon become indifferent to them all, and conclude one woman to be just about as good as another. The household affections do not grow in that way. And the right method in the culture of the mind is to take a few choice books, and weave about them

> the fix'd delights of house and home,
> Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.

Again · In teaching English literature, I think it is not best

to proceed much, if at all, by recitations, but by what may be called exercises; the pupils reading the author under the direction, correction, and explanation of the teacher. The thing is to have the pupils, with the teacher's help and guidance, commune with the author while in class, and quietly drink in the sense and spirit of his workmanship. Such communing together of teacher and pupils with the mind of a good book cannot but be highly fruitful to them both: an interplay of fine sympathies and inspirations will soon spring up between them, and pleasant surprises of truth and good will be stealing over them. The process indeed can hardly fail to become a real sacrament of the heart between them; for they will here find how "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Nor would I attempt to work into these exercises any thing of grammar or rhetoric or philology, any further than this may be clearly needful or conducive to a full and fair understanding of the matter read. To use a standard author mainly as a theme or text for carrying on studies in philology, is in my account just putting the cart before the horse. Here the end is or should be to make the pupils understand and relish what the author delivers; and whatever of philological exercise comes in should be held strictly subordinate to this.

With my classes in Shakespeare and Wordsworth, as also in Burke and Webster, I am never at all satisfied, unless I see the pupils freely taking pleasure in the workmanship. For such delight in a good book is to me a sure token and proof that its virtue is striking in and going to the spot. Rather say, it is a pledge, nay, it is the very pulsation, of sympathy and vital magnetism between the mind within and the object without. And without this blessed infection

beaming in the face and sparkling in the eyes, even the honest striving of duty on the pupil's part rather discourages me. So, unless I can get the pupils to be happy in such communion, I am unhappy myself; and this, I suppose, because it is naturally unpleasant to see people standing in the presence and repeating the words of that which is good, and tasting no sweetness therein. For "what is noble should be sweet"; and ought, if possible, to be bound up with none but pleasant associations; that so delight and love may hold the mind in perpetual communion with the springs of health and joy. And if I can plant in young minds a genuine relish for the authors I have named, then I feel tolerably confident that the devils now swarming about us in the shape of bad books will stand little chance with them; for I know right well that those authors have kept legions of such devils off from me.

From all which it follows, next, that, in teaching English literature, I would have nothing to do with any works in formal rhetoric, or with any general outlines, or any rapid and wide surveys, or any of the school reading-books now in use, which are made up of mere chips from a multitude of authors, and so can have little effect but to generate a rambling and desultory habit of mind. To illustrate my meaning, it may not be amiss to observe, that some years ago I knew of a program being set forth officially, which embraced little bits from a whole rabble of American authors, most of them still living; but not a single sentence from Daniel Webster; who, it seems to me, is perhaps the only American author that ought to have been included in the list. This program was drawn up for a course in English literature to be used in the public schools. Instead of such a miscellaneous collection of splinters, my thought was then, and

is now, Give us a good large block of Webster; enough for at least two exercises a week through half a year. This would afford a fair chance of making the pupils really at home with one tall and genuine roll of intellectual manhood; which done, they would then have something to guide and prompt them into the society of other kindred rolls: whereas, with the plan proposed, there is no chance of getting them at home with any intellectual manhood at all; nay, rather, it is just the way to keep them without any intellectual home,— a nomadic tribe of literary puddle-sippers.

As for the matter of rhetoric, all that can be of much use in this is, I think, best learned in the concrete, and by familiarizing the mind with standard models of excellence. For the right use of speech goes by habit, not by rule. And if people should happen to use their vernacular clearly and handsomely without knowing why, where is the harm of it? Is not that enough? What more do you want? If you would learn to speak and write the English tongue correctly, tastefully, persuasively, leave the rhetorics behind, and give your days and nights to the masters of English style. This will tend to keep you from all affectation of "fine writing," than which literature has nothing more empty and vapid. Besides, it is only *after* the mind has grown largely and closely conversant with standard authors, that studying rhetorical rules and forms can be of much practical use, however it may do for showing off in recitation. And I am in doubt whether it were not better omitted even then: for such study, in so far as it is trusted in for forming a good style, can hardly work any thing but damage in that respect; and this because it naturally sets one to imitating other men's verbal felicities; which is simply a pestilent vice of style. Therewithal the study is but too apt to possess the student,

perhaps unconsciously, with the notion that men are to "laugh by precept only, and shed tears by rule"; a sort of laughter and tears from which I shall beg to be excused. On this point, my first, second, and third counsel is, —

> the live current quaff,
> And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
> In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
> Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.

Against the course I have been marking out, the objection is sometimes urged that it would cut pupils off from contemporary authors. It would do so indeed, and I like it the better for that. I have already implied that no literary workmanship, short of the best there is to be had, ought to be drawn upon for use in school. For the natural alliance of taste and morals is much closer than most people suppose. In fact, taste is, in my account, a kind of intellectual conscience: downright, perfect honesty is the first principal of it; solidity is its prime law; and all sorts of pretence, affectation, and sham are its aversion: so that it amounts to about the same thing as the perfect manliness which I find in Webster's style. — Now, for the due approval of excellence in literary art, a longer time than the individual life is commonly required. Of the popular writers now living, probably not one in five hundred will be heard of thirty years hence. I have myself outlived two generations of just such immortal writers, — whole regiments of them. Of course there are fashions in literature, as in other things. These are apt to be bad enough at the best, — bad enough anywhere; but the school is just the last place, except the church, where they ought to be encouraged. Be assured that, in the long run, it will not pay to have our children in school making acquaintance with the fashionable writers of the day. For,

long before the pupils now in school reach maturity, another set of writers will be in popular vogue; their tenure to be equally transient in turn.

Unquestionably the right way in this matter is, to start the young with such authors as have been tested and approved by a large collective judgment. For it is not what pleases at first, but what pleases permanently, that the human mind cares to keep alive. What has thus withstood the wear of time carries solid proof of having strength and virtue in it. For example, poetry that has no holiness in it may be, for it often has been, vastly popular in its day; but it has and can have no lasting hold on the heart of man. True, there may be good books written in our day; I think there are: but there needs a longer trial than one generation to certify us of the fact, so as to warrant us in adopting an author for standard use. And that a new book seems to us good, may be in virtue of some superficial prepossession which a larger trial will utterly explode. We need better assurance than that.

It is indeed sometimes urged that, if the young be thus trained up with old authors, they will be in danger of falling behind the age. But it is not so. The surest way of coming at such a result is by pre-engaging them with the literary freaks and fashions and popularities of the day. To hold them aloof from such flitting popularities, to steep their minds in the efficacy of such books as have always been, and are likely to be, above the fashion of the day,—this is the true course for setting them *in advance* of the time; and, unless they be set in advance of it, they will certainly fail to keep abreast with it. For the wisdom that has had the long and strong approval of the past, is most likely to be the wisdom of the future; and the way to keep pace with the age is by

dwelling with its wisdom, not with its folly. In fact, a taste for the shifting literary fashions and popularities of the hour springs from shallowness and leads to shallowness. And to knit your pupils up close with old standards, is the best thing you can do for them, both mentally and morally.

And I confess I like to see the young growing enthusiastic over the treasured wisdom and eloquence of their forefathers. This is a natural and wholesome inspiration, and such as the soul can hardly drink-in or catch without being lifted and expanded by it. Worth much for the knowledge it furthers, it is worth far more for the manhood it quickens. And I think none the worse of it, that it may do somewhat towards chastising down the miserable conceit now so rife amongst us, that light never really dawned on the world till about that glorious time when our eyes were first opened, and we began to shed our wisdom abroad. To be sure, the atmosphere of the past now stands impeached as being a very dull and sleepy atmosphere: nevertheless I rather like it, and think I have often found much health and comfort in breathing it. Some old writer tells us that "no man having drunk old wine straightway desireth the new; for he saith the old is better." I am much of the same opinion. In short, old wine, old books, old friends, old songs, "the precious music of the heart," are the wine, the books, the friends, the songs for me!

Besides, we have quite enough of the present outside of the school; and one of our greatest needs at this very time is more of inspiration from the past. Living too much in the present is not good either for the mind or for the heart: its tendency is to steep the soul in the transient popularities of the hour, and to vulgarize the whole man. Not that the present age is worse than former ages; it may even be better

as a whole: but what is bad or worthless in an age generally dies with the age: so that only the great and good of the past touches us; while of the present we are most touched by that which is little and mean. The shriekings and jabberings of an age's folly almost always drown, for the time being, the eloquence of its wisdom: but the eloquence lives and speaks after the jabberings have gone silent, God's air refusing to propagate them. So let our youth now and then breathe and listen an hour or two in the old intellectual fatherland, where all the foul noises have long since died away, leaving the pure music to sound up full and clear.

THE POET'S LIFE.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE — the greatest, wisest, sweetest of men — was baptized in the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, April 26th, 1564. The day of his birth is not positively known, but the general custom then was to baptize infants at three days old, and the custom is justly presumed to have been followed in this instance. Accordingly the 23d of April is agreed upon everywhere throughout the English-speaking world as the Poet's birthday, and is often celebrated as such with appropriate festivities. His father was John Shakespeare, a well-reputed citizen of Stratford, who held, successively, various local offices, closing with those of Mayor of the town and Head-Alderman. His mother was Mary, youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a man of good landed estate, who lived at Wilmecote, some three miles from Stratford.

Nothing further is directly known of Shakespeare till his marriage, which took place in November, 1582, when he was in his nineteenth year. The bride was Anne, daughter of Richard Hathaway, a yeoman living at Shottery, which was a village near Stratford, and belonging to the same parish. The date of her baptism is not known; but the baptismal register of Stratford did not begin till 1558. She

died August 6th, 1623, and the inscription on her monument gives her age as sixty-seven years; so that her birth must have been in 1556, some eight years before that of her husband. Their first child, Susanna, was baptized May 26th, 1583. Two more children, twins, were christened Hamnet and Judith, on the 2d of February, 1585, the Poet then being nearly twenty-one years old.

We have no certain knowledge as to when or why Shakespeare became an actor. At the last-named date, his father, after some years of thrift, had evidently suffered a considerable decline of fortune. Perhaps this was one reason of his leaving Stratford. Another reason may have been, that, as tradition gives it, he engaged, along with others, in a rather wild poaching frolic on the grounds of Sir Thomas Lucy, who owned a large estate not far from Stratford; which act Sir Thomas resented so sharply, that Shakespeare thought it best to quit the place and go to London.

But the Drama was then a great and rising institution in England, and of course the dramatic interest had its centre in the metropolis. There were various companies of players in London, who used, at certain seasons, to go about the country, and perform in towns and villages. Stratford was often visited by such companies during the Poet's boyhood, and some of the players appear to have been natives of that section. In particular, the company that he afterwards belonged to performed there repeatedly while he was just about the right age to catch the spirit from them. And, from what he actually accomplished in the Drama, it is evident that he must have had a great natural genius for just that sort of thing. Now such genius must needs have corresponding instincts, which are uneasy and restless till they find their natural place, but spontaneously recognize and take to that

place on meeting with it. So, when dramatic performances fell under the youthful Shakespeare's eye, his genius could hardly fail to be strongly kindled towards the Drama as its native and proper element; the pre-established harmony thus instinctively prompting and guiding him to the work for which his mind was specially attuned, and in which it would be most at home. This, no doubt, was the *principal* cause of his betaking himself to the stage. Nothing further was wanting but an answering opportunity; and this was supplied by the passion for dramatic entertainments which then pervaded all ranks of the English people.

Shakespeare probably left Stratford in 1586 or thereabouts. Be that as it may, the next positive information we have of him is from a pamphlet written in 1592 by Robert Greene, a poor profligate who was then dying from the effects of his vices. Greene, who had himself written a good deal for the stage, there squibs some one as being, "in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country." There is no doubt that this refers to Shakespeare; and some of the terms applied to the *Shake-scene* clearly infer that the Poet was already getting to be well known as a writer of plays. After Greene's death, his pamphlet was given to the public by one Henry Chettle, who, on being remonstrated with by the persons assailed, published an apology, in which he expresses regret for the attack on Shakespeare, adding, "because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art."

Our next authentic notice of Shakespeare is by the publication of his *Venus and Adonis*, in 1593. This poem was dedicated to Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton, who

was among the finest young noblemen of that time; and the language of the dedication is such as the Poet would hardly have used but to a warm personal friend. The following year, 1594, he published his *Lucrece*, dedicating it to the same nobleman, in still warmer terms of address, and indirectly acknowledging important obligations to him. The same year Spenser wrote his *Colin Clout's Come Home again*, in which we have the following, clearly referring to Shakespeare: —

> And there, though last not least, is Ætion:
> A gentler Shepherd may nowhere be found,
> Whose Muse, full of high thought's invention,
> *Doth like himself heroically sound.*

This was Spenser's delicate way of suggesting the Poet's name. Ben Jonson has a like allusion in his lines "To the Memory of my beloved Mr. William Shakespeare": —

> In each of which he seems to *shake a lance*,
> As brandish'd at the eyes of Ignorance.

All which may suffice to show that the Poet was not long in making his way to the favourable regards of some whose good opinion was most to be desired, and whose respect was a strong pledge both of recognized genius and personal worth in the object of it. It is to be noted, however, that the forecited marks of consideration were paid to him altogether as an author, and not as an actor. As an actor it does not appear that he was ever much distinguished; though some of the parts which tradition reports him to have sustained would naturally infer him to have been at least respectable in that capacity; and when Chettle speaks of him as "excellent in the quality he professes," the word *quality* refers, undoubtedly, to his profession as an actor. But it must have been early evident that his gift looked in

another direction; and his associates could not have been long in finding his services most useful in the work for which he was specially gifted.

The dramatic company of which Shakespeare was a member were known as "the Lord Chamberlain's Servants." Richard Burbage, probably the greatest actor of the time, was a member of the same. The company had for some years owned and occupied what was called the Blackfriars theatre. This building did not afford accommodation enough for their business. So, in December, 1593, the company went about building the Globe theatre, in which Shakespeare is known to have been a considerable owner. And the obligations which I have spoken of his being under to Southampton were probably on account of some generous aid which this nobleman rendered him towards that enterprise. Tradition tell us that the Earl gave him a thousand pounds for the occasion. As this would be fully equivalent to $30,000 in our time, we may well stick at the alleged amount of the gift; but the Earl's approved liberality in such matters renders even that sum not incredible, and assures us, at all events, that the present must have been something decidedly handsome; though, to be sure, tradition may have overdrawn the amount.

It does not appear that the Poet at any time had his family with him in London. But it is very evident that his thoughts were a good deal with them at Stratford; for he is soon found saving up money from his London business, and investing it in lands and houses in his native town. The parish register of Stratford notes the death of his only son, Hamnet, then in his twelfth year, on the 11th of August, 1596. So far as is known, he never had any children but the three already mentioned.

In the spring of 1597, he bought of William Underhill the establishment called "New Place," and described as consisting of "one messuage, two barns, and two gardens." This was one of the best dwelling-houses in Stratford, and was situate in one of the best parts of the town. From that time onward we have many similar tokens of his thrift, which I must not stay to note in detail. Suffice it to say that for several years he continued to make frequent investments in Stratford and the neighbourhood; thus justifying the statement of Rowe, that "he had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasions"; and that "the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends."

None of his plays are known to have been printed till 1597, in which year three of them, *King Richard II.*, *King Richard III.*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, came from the press, separately, and in quarto form. The next year, Francis Meres published his *Wit's Treasury*, in which he specifies by title the three plays already named, and also nine others. Besides these twelve, several others also are known to have been in being at that time; and it is all but certain that as many at least as eighteen of the Poet's dramas were written before 1598, when he was thirty-four years old, and had probably been in the theatre about twelve years.

The Poet seems to have been laudably ambitious of gaining a higher social position than that to which he was born. So, in 1599, he procured from the Heralds' College in London a coat-of-arms in the name of his father. Thus he got his yeoman sire dubbed a gentleman, doubtless that the honour might be his by inheritance, as he was his father's eldest son. The Poet's father was buried at Stratford, September

8th, 1601; and thenceforward we find him written down in legal documents as "William Shakespeare, Gentleman."

King James the First came to the throne of England in March, 1603. On the 17th of May following, he ordered a patent to be issued under the Great Seal, authorizing "our servants, Laurence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage," and six others, to exercise their art in all parts of the kingdoms, "as well for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them." By this instrument, the company who had hitherto been known as the Lord Chamberlain's Servants were taken directly under the royal patronage; accordingly they were thenceforth designated as "the King's Players."

Whatever may have been his rank as an actor, Shakespeare evidently had a strong dislike to the vocation, and was impatient of his connection with the stage as a player. We have an affecting proof of this in one of his Sonnets, where he unmistakeably discovers his personal feelings on that point: —

> O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means, which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

Moreover, as Dyce remarks, "it is evident that Shakespeare never ceased to turn his thoughts towards his birth-place, as the spot where he hoped to spend the evening of his days in honourable retirement." It is uncertain at what time he withdrew from the stage. The latest notice we have of his acting was in 1603, when Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* was performed at the Blackfriars, and one of the parts was sustained

by him. The probability is that he ceased to be an actor in the course of the next year; though it is tolerably certain that he kept up his interest in the affairs of the company some years longer, and that he continued to write more or less for the stage down to as late a period as 1613.

The Poet's eldest daughter, Susanna, was married, June 5th, 1607, to John Hall, a gentleman, and a medical practitioner at Stratford, and well-reputed as such throughout the county. His first grandchild, Elizabeth Hall, was baptized, February 21st, 1608. On the 9th of September following, his mother died. His other daughter, Judith, was married to Thomas Quiney, February 10th, 1616. Quiney was four years younger than his wife, and was a vintner and wine-merchant at Stratford.

Perhaps I ought to add that Meres, in the work already quoted, speaks of the Poet's "sugared Sonnets among his private friends." At length, in 1609, these, and such others as the Poet may have written after 1598, were collected, to the number of a hundred and fifty-four, and published. By this time, also, as many as sixteen of his plays, including the three already named, had been issued, some of them repeatedly, in quarto form.

On the 25th of March, 1616, Shakespeare executed his will. The testator is there said to be "in perfect health and memory"; nevertheless he died at New Place on the 23d of April following; and, two days later, was buried beside the chancel of Stratford church. It is said that "his wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him"; and accordingly two of them at least, the wife and the eldest daughter, were in due time gathered to his side.

Shakespeare was by no means so little appreciated in his

time as later generations have mainly supposed. Besides the passages already cited, we have many other notes of respect and esteem from his contemporaries. No man indeed of that age was held in higher regard for his intellectual gifts; none drew forth more or stronger tributes of applause. Kings, princes, lords, gentlemen, and, what is perhaps still better, common people, all united in paying homage to his transcendent genius. And from the scattered notices of his contemporaries, we get, also, a pretty complete and very exalted idea of his personal character. How dearly he was held by those who knew him best is well shown by a passage of Ben Jonson's, written long after the Poet's death, and not published till 1640: "I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions." And we have similar testimony from John Heminge and Henry Condell, the Poet's friends and fellow-actors, and the Editors of the first folio, in the dedication of which they profess to have collected and published the plays, "without ambition of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive, as was our Shakespeare."

Thus much, or rather thus little, is about all that we are permitted to know touching the personal history of, probably, the greatest intellect that ever appeared in our world. Yet, little, very little though it be, there is enough, I think, to show that in all the common dealings of life he was eminently gentle, candid, upright, and judicious; open-hearted, genial, and sweet in his social intercourses; while, in the smooth and happy marriage which he seems to have realized, of the highest poetry and art with systematic and successful prudence in business affairs, we have an example of well-

rounded, practical manhood, such as may justly engage our admiration and respect.

Shakespeare was still in the meridian of life. There was no special cause, that we know of, why he might not live many years longer. It were vain to conjecture what he would have done, had more years been given him; possibly, instead of augmenting his legacy to us, he would have recalled and suppressed more or less of what he had written as our inheritance. For the last two or three years, at least, he seems to have left his pen unused; as if, his own ends once achieved, he set no value on that mighty sceptre with which he since sways so large a portion of mankind. That the motives and ambitions of authorship had little to do in the generation of his works, is evident from the serene carelessness with which he left them to shift for themselves; tossing those wonderful treasures from him as if he thought them good for nothing but to serve the hour.

It was in and for the theatre that his multitudinous genius was developed, and his works produced; there fortune, or rather Providence, had cast his lot. Doubtless it was his nature, in whatever he undertook, to do his best. As an honest and true man, he would, if possible, make the temple of the Drama a noble, a beautiful, and glorious place; and it was while working quietly and unobtrusively in furtherance of this end — building better than he knew — that he made his immortal preparations of wisdom and sweetness for the world.

INTRODUCTION.

History of the Play.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE was registered at the Stationers' in July, 1598, but with a special proviso, "that it be not printed without license first had from the Right-Honourable the Lord Chamberlain." The theatrical company to which Shakespeare belonged were then known as "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants"; and the purpose of the proviso was to keep the play out of print till the company's permission were given through their patron. The play was entered again at the same place in October, 1600, his lordship's license having probably been obtained by that time. Accordingly two editions of it were published in the course of that year, one by James Roberts, the other by Thomas Heyes. These were evidently printed from two distinct manuscripts, both of which had probably been transcribed from the author's original copy. The play was never issued again, that we know of, till in the folio of 1623, where it stands the ninth in the division of Comedies. The repetition of certain peculiarities shows it to have been there printed, with some alterations, from the quarto of Heyes.

In 1598, Francis Meres published his *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury*, in which we have the following: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins; so Shakespeare among the

English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage." In "witness" of this, he then mentions twelve of the Poet's dramas by name, *The Merchant of Venice* being one of them. How long before that time the play was written we have no means of knowing; but, judging from the style, we cannot well assign the writing to a much earlier date; though there is some reason for thinking it may have been on the stage four years earlier; as Henslowe's *Diary* records *The Venetian Comedy* as having been originally acted in August, 1594. It is by no means certain, however, that this refers to Shakespeare's play; while the workmanship here shows such maturity and variety of power as argue against that supposal. It evinces, in a considerable degree, the easy, unlabouring freedom of conscious mastery; the persons being so entirely under the author's control, and subdued to his hand, that he seems to let them talk and act just as they have a mind to. Therewithal the style, throughout, is so even and sustained; the word and the character are so fitted to each other; the laws of dramatic proportion are so well observed; and the work is so free from any jarring or falling-out from the due course and order of art; as to justify the belief that the whole was written in the same stage of intellectual growth and furnishing.

Sources of the Plot.

In the composition of this play the Poet drew largely from preceding writers. Novelty of plot or story there is almost none. Nevertheless, in conception and development of character, in poetical texture and grain, in sap and flavour of wit and humour, and in all that touches the real life and virtue of the workmanship, it is one of the most original productions that ever issued from the human mind. Of the

materials here used, some were so much the common stock of European literature before the Poet's time, and had been run into so many variations, that it is not easy to say what sources he was most indebted to for them.

It is beyond question that there was an earlier play running more or less upon the same or similar incidents. For Stephen Gosson published, in 1579, a tract entitled *The School of Abuse*, in which he mentions a certain play as "The Jew, shown at the Bull, representing the greediness of worldly choosers, and the bloody minds of usurers." This would fairly infer that Shakespeare was not the first to combine, in dramatic form, the two incidents of the caskets and the pound of flesh: but, nothing further being now known touching the order and character of that older performance, we can affirm nothing as to how far he may have followed or used it in the composition of his play.

The original of the casket-lottery dates far back in the days of Mediæval Romance; and the substance of it was variously repeated, from time to time, by successive authors, till Shakespeare spoilt it for further use. It is met with in the *Gesta Romanorum*, an old and curious collection of tales; and as the version there given is clearly identified as the one used by Shakespeare directly or indirectly, it seems hardly worth the while to notice, here, any of the other versions.

Anselm, Emperor of Rome, having been long childless, has at length a son born to him. His great enemy, the King of Naples, wishing to end their strife, proposes a marriage between his daughter and the Emperor's son. The latter consents, and in due time the princess embarks for Rome. A terrible storm arising, the ship is wrecked, and all on board perish except the princess. Before she can make good her

escape, she is swallowed by a huge whale. But she happens to be armed with a sharp knife, which she uses so vigorously in her strange lodging, that the whale soon has the worst of it. The monster thereupon makes for the shore, and is there killed by a knight, who rescues the princess, and takes her under his protection. On relating her story, she is conveyed to the Emperor, who, to prove whether she is worthy of his son, puts before her three vessels: the first made of pure gold, and outwardly set with rich gems, but within full of dead men's bones; the second made of fine silver, but filled with earth and worms; the third made of lead, but full within of precious stones. On the first is inscribed "Whoso chooseth me shall find what he deserveth"; on the second, "Whoso chooseth me shall find what his nature desireth"; on the third, "Whoso chooseth me shall find what God has disposed to him." The Emperor then orders her to choose one of the vessels, telling her that, if she chooses that which will profit herself and others, she shall have his son. The princess chooses the third, and is forthwith married to the young prince.

The incidents of the bond, the forfeiture, the pound of flesh, and the mode in which the penalty is escaped, are also related in the *Gesta Romanorum*, but not in connection with that of the caskets. It is certain, however, that in this the Poet did not draw from the *Gesta*, but, directly or indirectly, from an Italian novel, by Giovanni Fiorentino, written as early as 1378, though not printed till 1500. The main points of the story are as follows: —

Giannetto, the adopted son of a Venetian merchant, Ansaldo, gets permission to visit Alexandria. On his voyage he lands at Belmont, where he finds a lady of great wealth and beauty, and falls deeply in love with her. He returns to

Venice, asks for a supply of money to enable him to prosecute his love-suit, and Ansaldo borrows 10,000 ducats of a Jew on the condition that, if the money be not repaid by a certain day, Ansaldo shall forfeit a pound of his flesh, to be cut off by the Jew. Giannetto gains the lady in marriage; but, forgetful of the bond, prolongs his stay at Belmont till the day of payment is past. Hastening to Venice, he finds the Jew rigid in exacting the penalty, and not to be turned from it even by ten times the amount of the loan. The bride, knowing the merchant's position, disguises herself as a doctor of law, repairs to Venice, and gets herself introduced as a judge into the court where the case is on trial: for in Italy, at that time, nice and difficult points of law were determined, not by the ordinary judges, but by doctors of law from Padua, Bologna, and other famous law-schools. The lady, unrecognized by her husband, learns the nature of the case, and, after reading the bond, calls on the Jew to take the pound of flesh, but tells him he must take neither more nor less than exactly a pound, and that he must shed no blood. An executioner is at hand to behead him in case any blood be drawn. The Jew then says he will accept the 100,000 ducats offered; but, as he has declared up and down repeatedly that he will have nothing but the pound of flesh, the judge refuses to allow any repayment of money whatever; and the Jew in a rage tears up the bond and quits the court. Hereupon Giannetto, overjoyed at the happy issue, yields up to the judge, in token of his gratitude, a ring which his wife had given him on their marriage-day; and the judge, on returning home and putting off the disguise, rails at her husband in fine terms about his parting with the ring, which she says she is sure he must have given to some woman.

There is also an old ballad entitled "The cruelty of Ger-

nutus, a Jew, who, lending to a Merchant a hundred crowns, would have a pound of his flesh, because he could not pay him at the day appointed." The ballad is of uncertain date; but Bishop Percy, who reprints it in his *Reliques* "from an ancient black-letter copy," gives strong reasons for thinking it to have been earlier than the play. If so, the Poet must have taken some points from it, as is evident from the following extracts: —

In Venice town, not long ago,
A cruel Jew did dwell,
Which livèd all on usury,
As Italian writers tell.

Within that city dwelt that time
A merchant of great fame,
Which, being distressèd, in his need
Unto Gernutus came;

Desiring him to stand his friend,
For twelvemonth and a day
To lend to him an hundred crowns;
And he for it would pay

Whatsoever he would demand of him;
And pledges he should have.
No, quoth the Jew with fleering looks,
Sir, ask what you will have.

No penny for the loan of it
For one year you shall pay:
You may do me as good a turn,
Before my dying day.

But we will have a merry jest,
For to be talkèd long:
You shall make me a bond, quoth he,
That shall be large and strong.

And this shall be the forfeiture,—
Of your own flesh a pound:
If you agree, make you the bond,
And here is a hundred crowns.

With right good will! the merchant says;
And so the bond was made.
When twelvemonth and a day drew on,
That back it should be paid,

The merchant's ships were all at sea,
And money came not in:
Which way to take, or what to do,
To think he doth begin.

Some offer'd for his hundred crowns
Five hundred for to pay;
And some a thousand, two, or three,
Yet still he did denay.

And, at the last, ten thousand crowns
They offer'd, him to save:
Gernutus said, I will no gold,—
My forfeit I will have.

The bloody Jew now ready is,
With whetted blade in hand,
To spoil the blood of innocent,
By forfeit of his bond.

And, as he was about to strike
In him the deadly blow,
Stay, quoth the judge, thy cruelty,—
I charge thee to do so.

Sith needs thou wilt thy forfeit have,
Which is of flesh a pound,
See that thou shed no drop of blood,
Nor yet the man confound.

For, if thou do, like murderer
Thou here shalt hangèd be;
Likewise of flesh see that thou cut
No more than 'longs to thee;

For if thou take either more or less,
To the value of a mite,
Thou shalt be hangèd presently,
As is both law and right.

Gernutus now wax'd frantic mad,
And wots not what to say;
Quoth he at last, Ten thousand crowns
I will that he shall pay;

And so I grant to let him free.
The judge doth answer make,—
You shall not have a penny given:
Your forfeiture now take.

General Characteristics.

The praise of this drama is in the mouth of nearly all the critics. That the praise is well deserved appears in that, from the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration till the present day, the play has kept its place on the stage; while it is also among the first of the Poet's works to be read, and the last to be forgotten, its interest being as durable in the closet as on the boards. Well do I remember it as the very beginning of my acquaintance with Shakespeare; one of the dearest acquaintances I have ever made, and which has been to me a source of more pleasure and profit than I should dare undertake to tell.

Critics have too often entertained themselves with speculations as to the Poet's specific moral purpose in this play or that. Wherein their great mistake is the not duly bearing in mind, that the special proposing of this or that moral lesson is quite from or beside the purpose of Art. Nevertheless a work of art, to be really deserving the name, must needs be moral, because it must be proportionable and true to Nature; thus attuning our inward forces to the voice of external order and law: otherwise it is at strife with the compact of things; a piece of dissonance; a jarring, unbalanced, crazy thing, that will die of its own internal disorder. If, then, a work

be morally bad, this proves the author more a bungler than any thing else. And if any one admire it or take pleasure in it, he does so, not from reason, but from something within him which his reason, in so far as he has any, necessarily disapproves: so that he is rather to be laughed at as a dunce than preached to as a sinner; though perhaps this latter should be done also.

As to the moral temper of *The Merchant of Venice*, critics have differed widely, some regarding the play as teaching the most comprehensive humanity, others as caressing the narrowest bigotries of the age. This difference may be fairly taken as an argument of the Poet's candour and evenhandedness. A special-pleader is not apt to leave the hearers in doubt on which side of the question he stands. In this play, as in others, the Poet, I think, ordered things mainly with a view to dramatic effect; though to such effect in the largest and noblest sense. And the highest praise compatible with the nature of the work is justly his, inasmuch as he did not allow himself to be swayed either way from the right measures and proportions of art. For Art is, from its very nature, obliged to be "without respect of persons." Impartiality is its essential law, the constituent of its being. And of Shakespeare it could least of all be said, —

> he narrow'd his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

He represented men as he had seen them. And he could neither repeal nor ignore the old law of human nature, in virtue of which the wisest and kindest men are more or less warped by social customs and prejudices, so that they come to do, and even to make a merit of doing, some things that are very unwise and unkind; while the wrongs and insults

which they are thus led to practise have the effect of goading the sufferers into savage malignity and revenge. Had he so clothed the latter with gentle and amiable qualities as to enlist the feelings all in their behalf, he would have given a false view of human nature, and his work would have lost much of its instructiveness on the score of practical morality. For good morals can never be reached by departures from truth. A rule that may be profitably remembered by all who are moved to act as advocates and special-pleaders in what they think a good cause.

Outline of the Story.

The leading incidents of the play are soon told. Antonio, the Merchant, has a strange mood of sadness upon him, and a parcel of his friends are bending their wits to play it off. Among them, and dearer to him than any of the rest, is one Bassanio, a gentleman who, young and generous, has lavished his fortune. Bassanio's heart is turning towards a wealthy heiress who, highly famed for gifts and virtues, resides not many miles off; and from whose eyes he has received "fair speechless messages." But he wants "the means to hold a rival place" among her princely suitors. Antonio's wealth and credit are freely pledged to his service. His funds, however, being all embarked in ventures at sea, he tries his credit with a rich Jew, whose person he has often insulted, and whose greed his Christian liberality has often thwarted. The Jew, feigning a merry humour, consents to lend the sum, provided Antonio sign a bond authorizing him, in case of forfeiture, to cut a pound of flesh from whatever part of his body he may choose. Antonio readily agrees to this, and so furnishes his friend for the loving enterprise.

Bassanio prosecutes his suit to the lady with success. But, while yet in his first transports of joy, he learns that Antonio's ventures at sea have all miscarried, and that the Jew, with malignant earnestness, claims the forfeiture. Leaving his bride the moment he has sworn the sweet oath, he hastens away, resolved to save his friend's life at the expense, if need be, of his own. Thereupon his virgin wife forthwith gets instructions from the most learned lawyer in those parts, and, habiting herself as a doctor of laws, repairs to the trial. To divert the Jew from his purpose, she taxes her wisdom and persuasion to the utmost, but in vain: scorning the spirit of Justice, and deaf to the voice of Mercy, both of which speak with heavenly eloquence from Portia's lips; rejecting thrice the amount of the bond, and standing immovable on the letter of the law; he pushes his revenge to the very point of making the fatal incision, when she turns the letter of the law against him, strips him of penalty, principal, and all, and subjects even his life to the mercy of the Duke. As the condition of his life, he is required to sign a deed securing all his wealth to his daughter who, loaded with his ducats and jewels, has lately eloped with another of Antonio's friends, and is staying at Portia's mansion during her absence. The play winds up with the hastening of all the parties, except the Jew, to Portia's home. When all have met, Portia announces to Antonio the safe return of his ships supposed to be lost, and surprises the fugitive lovers with the news of their good fortune.

The Characters.

In respect of characterization this play is exceedingly rich, and this too both in quantity and quality. The persons naturally fall into three several groups, with each its several

plot and action; yet the three are skilfully complotted, each standing out clear and distinct in its place, yet so drawing in with the others, that every thing helps on every thing else; there being neither any confusion nor any appearance of care to avoid it. Of these three groups, Antonio, Shylock, and Portia are respectively the centres; while the part of Lorenzo and Jessica, though strictly an episode, seems nevertheless to grow forth as an element of the original germ; a sort of inherent superfluity, and as such essential to the well-being of the piece. But perhaps it may be better described as a fine romantic undertone accompaniment to the other parts; itself in perfect harmony with them, and therefore perfecting their harmony with each other.

In the first entry at the Stationers', the play is described as "*The Merchant of Venice*, or otherwise called *The Jew of Venice*." This would seem to infer that the author was then in some doubt whether to name it from Antonio or Shylock. As an individual, Shylock is altogether *the* character of the play, and exhibits more of mastership than all the others; so that, viewing the persons severally, we should say the piece ought to be named from him. But we have not far to seek for good reasons why it should rather be named as it is. For if the Jew is the more important individually, the Merchant is so dramatically. Antonio is the centre and main-spring of the action: without him, Shylock, however great in himself, had no business there. And the laws of dramatic combination, not any accident of individual prominence, are clearly what ought to govern in the naming of the play.

Antonio.

Not indeed that the Merchant is a small matter in himself; far from it: he is a highly interesting and attractive personage; nor am I sure but there may be timber enough in him for a good dramatic hero, apart from the Jew. Something of a peculiar charm attaches to him, from the state of mind in which we first see him. A dim, mysterious presage of evil weighs down his spirits, as though he felt afar off the coming-on of some great calamity. Yet this unwonted dejection, sweetened as it is with his habitual kindness and good-nature, has the effect of showing how dearly he is held by such whose friendship is the fairest earthly purchase of virtue. And it is considerable that upon tempers like his even the smiles of fortune often have a strangely saddening effect. For such a man, even because he is good, is apt to be haunted with a sense of having more than he deserves; and this may not unnaturally inspire him with an indefinable dread of some reverse which shall square up the account of his present blessings. Thus his very happiness works, by subtle methods, to charge his heart with certain dark forebodings. So that such presentiments, whatever the disciples of positivism may say, are in the right line of nature: —

> Oft, startled and made wise
> By their low-breathed interpretings,
> The simply-meek foretaste the springs
> Of bitter contraries.

But the sorrow can hardly be ungrateful to us, that has such noble comforters as Antonio's. Our nature is honoured in the feelings that spring up on both sides.

Wealth indeed seldom dispenses such warnings save to its most virtuous possessors. And such is Antonio. A kind-

hearted and sweet-mannered man; of a large and liberal spirit; affable, generous, and magnificent in his dispositions; patient of trial, indulgent to weakness, free where he loves, and frank where he hates; in prosperity modest, in adversity cheerful; craving wealth for the uses of virtue, and as the sinews of friendship; — his character is one which we never weary of contemplating. The only blemish we perceive in him is his treatment of Shylock: in this, though evidently much more the fault of the times than of the man, we cannot help siding against him; than which we need not ask a clearer instance of poetical justice. Yet even this we blame rather as a wrong done to himself than to Shylock; inasmuch as the latter, notwithstanding he has had such provocations, avowedly grounds his hate mainly on those very things which make the strongest title to a good man's love. For the Jew's revenge fastens not so much on the man's abuse of him as on his kindness to others.

Antonio's Friends.

The friendship between the Merchant and his companions is such a picture as Shakespeare evidently delighted to draw. And so fair a sentiment is not apt to inhabit ignoble breasts. Bassanio, Gratiano, and Salarino are each admirable in their way, and give a pleasing variety to the scenes where they move. Bassanio, though something too lavish of purse, is a model of a gentleman; in whose character and behaviour all is order and propriety; with whom good manners are the proper outside and visibility of a fair mind, — the natural foliage and drapery of inward refinement and delicacy and rectitude. Well-bred, he has that in him which, even had his breeding been ill, would have raised him above it and made him a gentleman.

Gratiano and Salarino are two as clever, sprightly, and voluble persons as any one need desire to be with; the chief difference between them being, that the former *lets* his tongue run on from good impulses, while the latter *makes* it do so for good ends. If not so wise as Bassanio, they are more witty; and as much surpass him in strength, as they fall short of him in beauty, of character. It is observable that of the two Gratiano, while much the more prone to flood us with his talk, also shows less subjection of the individual to the common forms of social decorum; so that, if he behaves not quite so well as the others, he gives livelier proof that what good behaviour he has is his own; a growth from within, not a piece of imitation. And we are rather agreeably surprised, that one so talkative and rattle-tongued should therewithal carry so much weight of meaning; and he sometimes appears less sensible than he is, because of his galloping volubility. But he has no wish to be "reputed wise for saying nothing"; and he makes a merit of talking nonsense when, as is sometimes the case, nonsense is the best sort of sense: for, like a prime good fellow, as he is, he would rather incur the charge of folly than not, provided he can thereby add to the health and entertainment of his friends.

Lorenzo and Jessica.

Lorenzo and Jessica, the runaway lovers, are in such a lyrical state of mind as rather hinders a clear view of their characters. Both are indeed overflowing with sweetness and beauty, but more, perhaps, as the result of nuptial inspiration than of inherent qualities. For I suppose the worst tempers are apt to run sweet while the honeymoon is upon them. However, as regards the present couple, it may be

justly said that the instrument should be well-tuned and delicately strung to give forth such tones, be it touched ever so finely. Even Love, potent little god as he is, can move none but choice spirits to such delectable issues. Jessica's elopement, in itself and its circumstances, puts us to the alternative that either she is a bad child or Shylock a bad father. And there is enough to persuade us of the latter; though not in such sort but that some share of the reproach falls to her. For if a young woman have so bad a home as to justify her in thus deserting and robbing it, the atmosphere of the place can hardly fail to leave *some* traces in her temper and character.

Lorenzo stands fair in our regard, negatively, because he does nothing unhandsome, positively, because he has such good men for his friends. And it is rather curious that what is thus done for him, should be done for Jessica by such a person as Launcelot Gobbo. For she and the clown are made to reflect each other's choicer parts: we think the better of her for having kindled something of poetry in such a clod, and of him for being raised above himself by such an object. And her conduct is further justified to our feelings by the odd testimony he furnishes of her father's badness; which testimony, though not of much weight in itself, goes far to confirm that of others. We see that the Jew is much the same at home as in the Rialto; that, let him be where he will, it is his nature to snarl and bite.

Launcelot Gobbo.

Such, in one view of the matter, is the dramatic propriety of this Launcelot. His part, though often faulted by those who can see but one thing at a time, materially aids the completeness of the work, in giving us a fuller view both

of Jessica and of her father. But he has also a value in himself irrespective of that use: his own personal rights enter into the purpose of his introduction; and he carries in himself a part of the reason why he is so, and not otherwise: for Shakespeare seldom if ever brings in a person *merely* for the sake of others. A mixture of conceit and drollery, and hugely wrapped up in self, he is by no means a commonplace buffoon, but stands firm in his sufficiency of original stock. His elaborate nonsense, his grasping at a pun without catching it, yet feeling just as grand as if he did, is both ludicrous and natural. His jokes to be sure are mostly failures; nevertheless they are laughable, because he dreams not but they succeed. The poverty of his wit is thus enriched by his complacency in dealing it out. His part indeed amply pays its way, in showing how much of mirth may be caused by feebleness in a great attempt at a small matter. Besides, in him the mother-element of the whole piece runs out into broad humour and travesty; his reasons for breaking with his master the Jew being, as it were, a variation in drollery upon the fundamental air of the play. Thus he exhibits under a comic form the general aspect of surrounding humanity; while at the same time his character is an integral part of that varied structure of human life which it belongs to the Gothic Drama to represent. On several accounts indeed he might not be spared.

The Heroine.

In Portia Shakespeare seems to have aimed at a perfect scheme of an amiable, intelligent, and accomplished woman. And the result is a fine specimen of beautiful nature enhanced by beautiful art. Eminently practical in her tastes and turn of mind, full of native, homebred sense and virtue,

Portia unites therewith something of the ripeness and dignity of a sage, a mellow eloquence, and a large, noble discourse; the whole being tempered with the best grace and sensibility of womanhood. As intelligent as the strongest, she is at the same time as feminine as the weakest of her sex: she talks like a poet and a philosopher, yet, strange to say, she talks, for all the world, just like a woman. She is as full of pleasantry, too, and as merry "within the limit of becoming mirth," as she is womanly and wise; and, which is more, her arch sportiveness always relishes as the free outcome of perfect moral health. Nothing indeed can be more fitting and well-placed than her demeanour, now bracing her speech with grave maxims of practical wisdom, now unbending her mind in sallies of wit, or of innocent, roguish banter. The sportive element of her composition has its happiest showing in her dialogue with Nerissa about the "parcel of wooers," and in her humorous description of the part she imagines herself playing in her purposed disguise. The latter is especially delightful from its harmonious contrast with the solid thoughtfulness which, after all, forms the staple and framework of her character. How charmingly it sets off the divine rapture of eloquence with which she discourses to the Jew of mercy! —

> I'll hold thee any wager,
> When we are both accoutred like young men,
> I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
> And wear my dagger with the braver grace;
> And speak between the change of man and boy
> With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps
> Into a manly stride; and speak of frays,
> Like a fine-bragging youth; and tell quaint lies,
> How honourable ladies sought my love,
> Which I denying, they fell sick and died,—
> I could not do withal; — then I'll repent,

> And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them:
> And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell;
> That men shall swear I've discontinued school
> Above a twelvemonth. I've within my mind
> A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
> Which I will practise.

Partly from condition, partly from culture, Portia has grown to live more in the understanding than in the affections; for which cause she is a little more self-conscious than I exactly like: yet her character is hardly the less lovely on that account: she talks considerably of herself indeed, but always so becomingly, that we hardly wish her to choose any other subject; for we are pleasantly surprised that one so well aware of her gifts should still bear them so meekly. Mrs. Jameson, with Portia in her eye, intimates Shakespeare to have been about the only artist, except Nature, who could make women wise without turning them into men. And it is well worth the noting that, honourable as the issue of her course at the trial would be to a man, Portia shows no unwomanly craving to be in the scene of her triumph: as she goes there prompted by the feelings and duties of a wife, and for the saving of her husband's honour and peace of mind, — being resolved that "never shall he lie by Portia's side with an unquiet soul"; so she gladly leaves when these causes no longer bear in that direction. Then too, exquisitely cultivated as she is, humanity has not been so refined out of her, but that in such a service she can stoop from her elevation, and hazard a brief departure from the sanctuary of her sex.

Being to act for once the part of a man, it would seem hardly possible for her to go through the undertaking without more of self-confidence than were becoming in a woman:

and the student may find plenty of matter for thought in the Poet's so managing as to prevent such an impression. For there is nothing like ostentation or conceit of intellect in Portia. Though knowing enough for any station, still it never once enters her head that she is too wise for the station which Providence or the settled order of society has assigned her. She would therefore neither hide her light under a bushel, that others may not see by it, nor perch it aloft in public, that others may see it; but would simply set it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all in her house. With her noble intellect she has gathered in the sweets of poetry and the solidities of philosophy, all for use, nothing for show; she has fairly domesticated them, has naturalized them in her sphere, and tamed them to her fireside, so that they seem as much at home there as if they had been made for no other place. And to all this mental enrichment she adds the skill

> So well to know
> Her own, that what she wills to do or say
> Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.

Portia's consciousness of power does indeed render her cool, collected, and firm, but never a whit unfeminine: her smooth command both of herself and of the matter she goes about rather heightens our sense of her modesty than otherwise: so that the impression we take from her is, that these high mental prerogatives are of no sex; that they properly belong to the common freehold of woman and man. Some of her speeches, especially at the trial, are evidently premeditated; for, as any good lawyer would do, she of course prepares herself in the case beforehand; but I should like to see the masculine lawyer that could premeditate any thing equal to them.

It is to be noted withal that she goes about her work without the least misgiving as to the result; having so thoroughly booked herself both in the facts and the law of the case as to feel perfectly sure on that point. Hence the charming ease and serenity with which she moves amid the excitements of the trial. No trepidations of anxiety come in to disturb the preconcerted order and method of her course. And her solemn appeals to the Jew are made in the earnest hope of inducing him to accept a full and liberal discharge of the debt. When she says to him, "there's thrice thy money offer'd thee," it is because she really feels that both the justice of the cause and the honour of her husband would be better served by such a payment than by the more brilliant triumph which awaits her in case the Jew should spurn her offer.

Thus her management of the trial, throughout, is a piece of consummate art; though of art in such a sense as presupposes perfect integrity of soul. Hence, notwithstanding her methodical forecast and preparation, she is as eloquent as an angel, and her eloquence, as by an instinctive tact, knows its time perfectly. One of her strains in this kind, her appeal to the Jew on the score of mercy, has been so often quoted, that it would long since have grown stale, if it were possible by any means to crush the freshness of unwithering youth out of it. And I hope it will not be taken as any abatement of the speaker's claim as a wise jurist, that she there carries both the head and the heart of a ripe Christian divine into the management of her cause. Yet her style in that speech is in perfect keeping with her habitual modes of thought and discourse: even in her most spontaneous expressions we have a reflex of the same intellectual physiognomy. For the mental aptitude which she

displays in the trial seems to have been the germinal idea out of which her whole part was consistently evolved; as the Poet's method often was, apparently, first to settle what his persons were to do, and then to conceive and work out their characters accordingly.

It has been said that Shakespeare's female characters are inferior to his characters of men. Doubtless in some respects they are so; they would not be female characters if they were not; but then in other respects they are superior. Some people apparently hold it impossible for man and woman to be equal and different at the same time. Hence the false equality of the sexes which has been of late so often and so excruciatingly advocated. On this ground, the Poet could not have made his women equal to his men without unsexing and unsphering them; which he was just as far from doing as Nature is. The alleged inferiority, then, of his women simply means, I suppose, that they are women, as they ought to be, and not men, as he meant they should not be, and as we have cause to rejoice that they are not. He knew very well that in this matter equality and diversity are nowise incompatible, and that the sexes might therefore stand or sit on the same level without standing in the same shoes or sitting in the same seats. If, indeed, he had not known this, he could not have given *characters* of either sex, but only wretched and disgusting medleys and caricatures of both.

How nicely, on the other hand, Shakespeare discriminates things that really differ, so as to present in all cases the soul of womanhood, without a particle of effeminacy; and how perfectly, on the other hand, he reconciles things that seem most diverse, pouring into his women all the intellectual forces of the other sex, without in the least impairing or obscuring their womanliness; — all this is not more rare in

poetry than it is characteristic of his workmanship. Thus Portia is as much superior to her husband in intellect, in learning, and accomplishment, as she is in wealth; but she is none the less womanly for all that. Nor, which is more, does she ever on that account take the least thought of inverting the relation between them. In short, her mental superiority breeds no kind of social displacement, nor any desire of it. Very few indeed of the Poet's men are more highly charged with intellectual power. While she is acting the lawyer in disguise, her speech and bearing seem to those about her in the noblest style of manliness. In her judge-like gravity and dignity of deportment; in the extent and accuracy of her legal knowledge; in the depth and appropriateness of her moral reflections; in the luminous order, the logical coherence, and the beautiful transparency of her thoughts, she almost rivals our Chief Justice Marshall. Yet to us, who are in the secret of her sex, all the proprieties, all the inward harmonies, of her character are exquisitely preserved; and the essential grace of womanhood seems to irradiate and consecrate the dress in which she is disguised.

Nor is it any drawback on her strength and substantial dignity of character, that her nature is all overflowing with romance: rather, this it is that glorifies her, and breathes enchantment about her; it adds that precious seeing to the eye which conducts her to such winning beauty and sweetness of deportment, and makes her the "rich-souled creature" that Schlegel describes her to be. Therewithal she may be aptly quoted as a mark-worthy instance how the Poet makes the several parts and persons of a drama cohere not only with one another but with the general circumstances wherein they occur. For so in Portia's character the splendour of Italian skies and scenery and art is reproduced; their spirit

lives in her imagination, and is complicated with all she does and says.

Since the foregoing was written, I have lighted upon the Rev. John Hunter's edition of the play, in the introduction to which the main features of Portia's character are so well expressed, that I am moved to reproduce the matter here: for Portia is so charming and so fruitful a study, that there is little danger of our hearing too much about her.

"With regard to Portia," says Mr. Hunter, "we should observe that Shakespeare, in designing that she should act the part of an assessor to the Duke in the trial scene, imposed on himself the necessity of distinguishing her by a considerable amount of intelligence, sagacity, and self-reliance. She is an intellectual character, at one time sparkling with vivacity of wit, at another glowing with serenity of wisdom; while all her sentiments are more or less influenced and adorned by a poetical imagination. She has the dignity of one who has been accustomed to move amidst the grandeur, and to rule the household, of a magnificent mansion; but she has affections that long to bestow her hand on some worthy lord, for whom she may feel it her happiness to live and to entertain loving respect.

"The idea that she is bound to take whatever husband the fortune of the caskets may allot to her does not, indeed, for a time appear much to discourage her natural cheerfulness: she seems to find satisfaction in dutifully honouring her father's will, and in trusting to the wise and good disposal of Providence. For Nerissa's assertion, about holy men at their death having good inspirations, is probably designed merely to let us know how Portia's heart was already influenced by reliance on the prophetic sagacity with which dying persons

were supposed to be gifted. But when she is asked whether she remembers the Venetian who had visited Belmont in company of the Marquess of Montferrat, she at once enables Nerissa to 'level' truly at her affection. And when this Venetian comes to 'hold a rival place' with the other suitors, the struggle which is then excited in her bosom, between the spirit of filial duty and the desire of unrestricted choice, is most naturally and forcibly exhibited.

"There is, indeed, a methodical style in the expression even of her most impassioned thoughts, which has induced some critics to impute to her a degree of affectation unusual in Shakespeare's delineations of female character: but we believe that the dramatist has herein observed a most judicious consistency; and that the language in which Portia describes her emotions is not the less indicative of genuine feeling for containing some reflex of that peculiar aptitude of mind which she displays in the trial scene. There she is methodical amidst all her excitement of anxiety for the honour of her husband. She has been furnished by her legal friend Bellario with advice, which assures her of saving the life of Antonio; but she would rather owe Antonio's preservation to a just and liberal discharge of her husband's debt than to a triumph by which the Jew will be deprived of every ducat; and, though the appeals by which she endeavours to make the Jew relent are characterized by an observance of formal argument, we should remember that she is all the while actuated by intense solicitude in the utterance of these appeals."

Shylock the Jew.

If Portia is the beauty of this play, Shylock is its strength. He is a standing marvel of power and scope in the dramatic

art; at the same time appearing so much a man of Nature's making, that we can hardly think of him as a creation of art. In the delineation Shakespeare had no less a task than to fill with individual life and peculiarity the broad, strong outlines of national character in its most revolting form. Accordingly Shylock is a true representative of his nation; wherein we have a pride which for ages never ceased to provoke hostility, but which no hostility could ever subdue; a thrift which still invited rapacity, but which no rapacity could ever exhaust; and a weakness which, while it exposed the subjects to wrong, only deepened their hate, because it kept them without the means or the hope of redress. Thus Shylock is a type of national sufferings, national sympathies, national antipathies. Himself an object of bitter insult and scorn to those about him; surrounded by enemies whom he is at once too proud to conciliate and too weak to oppose; he can have no life among them but money; no hold on them but interest; no feeling towards them but hate; no indemnity out of them but revenge. Such being the case, what wonder that the elements of national greatness became congealed and petrified into malignity? As avarice was the passion in which he mainly lived, the Christian virtues that thwarted this naturally seemed to him the greatest of wrongs.

With these strong national traits are interwoven personal traits equally strong. Thoroughly and intensely Jewish, he is not more a Jew than he is Shylock. In his hard, icy intellectuality, and his dry, mummy-like tenacity of purpose, with a dash now and then of biting sarcastic humour, we see the remains of a great and noble nature, out of which all the genial sap of humanity has been pressed by accumulated injuries. With as much elasticity of mind as stiffness of neck, every step he takes but the last is as firm as the earth

he treads upon. Nothing can daunt, nothing disconcert him; remonstrance cannot move, ridicule cannot touch, obloquy cannot exasperate him: when he has not provoked them, he has been forced to bear them; and now that he does provoke them, he is hardened against them. In a word, he may be broken; he cannot be bent.

Shylock is great in every scene where he appears, yet each later scene exhibits him in a new element or aspect of greatness. For as soon as the Poet has set forth one side or phase of his character, he forthwith dismisses that, and proceeds to another. For example, the Jew's cold and penetrating sagacity, as also his malignant and remorseless guile, are finely delivered in the scene with Antonio and Bassanio, where he is first solicited for the loan. And the strength and vehemence of passion, which underlies these qualities, is still better displayed, if possible, in the scene with Antonio's two friends, Solanio and Salarino, where he first avows his purpose of exacting the forfeiture. One passage of this scene has always seemed to me a peculiarly idiomatic strain of eloquence, steeped in a mixture of gall and pathos; and I the rather notice it, because of the wholesome lesson which Christians may gather from it. Of course the Jew is referring to Antonio: —

"He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not

bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge: if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

I have spoken of the mixture of national and individual traits in Shylock. It should be observed further, that these several elements of character are so attempered and fused together, that we cannot distinguish their respective influence. Even his avarice has a smack of patriotism. Money is the only defence of his brethren as well as of himself, and he craves it for their sake as well as his own; feels indeed that wrongs are offered to them in him, and to him in them. Antonio has scorned his religion, balked him of usurious gains, insulted his person: therefore he hates him as a Christian, himself a Jew; hates him as a lender of money gratis, himself a griping usurer; hates him as Antonio, himself Shylock. Moreover, who but a Christian, one of Antonio's faith and fellowship, has stolen away his daughter's heart, and drawn her into revolt, loaded with his ducats and his precious, precious jewels?

Thus his religion, his patriotism, his avarice, his affection, all concur to stimulate his enmity; and his personal hate thus reinforced overcomes for once his greed, and he grows generous in the prosecution of his aim. The only reason he will vouchsafe for taking the pound of flesh is, "if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge"; a reason all the more satisfactory to him, forasmuch as those to whom he gives it can neither allow it nor refute it: and until they can

rail the seal from off his bond, all their railings are but a foretaste of the revenge he seeks. In his eagerness to taste that morsel sweeter to him than all the luxuries of Italy, his recent afflictions, the loss of his daughter, his ducats, his jewels, and even the precious ring given him by his departed wife, all fade from his mind. In his inexorable and imperturbable hardness at the trial there is something that makes the blood to tingle. It is the sublimity of malice. We feel that the yearnings of revenge have silenced all other cares and all other thoughts. In his rapture of hate the man has grown superhuman, and his eyes seem all aglow with preternatural malignity. Fearful, however, as is his passion, he comes not off without moving our pity. In the very act whereby he thinks to avenge his own and his brethren's wrongs, the national curse overtakes him. In standing up for the letter of the law against all the pleadings of mercy, he has strengthened his enemies' hands, and sharpened their weapons, against himself; and the terrible Jew sinks at last into the poor, pitiable, heart-broken Shylock.

Early in the play, when Shylock is bid forth to Bassanio's supper, and Launcelot urges him to go, because "my young master doth expect your reproach," Shylock replies, "So do I his." Of course he expects that reproach through the bankruptcy of Antonio. This would seem to infer that Shylock has some hand in getting up the reports of Antonio's "losses at sea"; which reports, at least some of them, turn out false in the end. Further than this, the Poet leaves us in the dark as to how those reports grew into being and gained belief. Did he mean to have it understood that the Jew exercised his cunning and malice in plotting and preparing them? It appears, at all events, that Shylock knew they were coming, before they came. Yet I suppose the

natural impression from the play is, that he lent the ducats and took the bond, on a mere chance of coming at his wish. But he would hardly grasp so eagerly at a bare possibility of revenge, without using means to turn it into something more. This would mark him with much deeper lines of guilt. Why, then, did not Shakespeare bring the matter forward more prominently? Perhaps it was because the doing so would have made Shylock appear too deep a criminal for the degree of interest which his part was meant to carry in the play. In other words, the health of the drama as a work of *comic* art required his criminality to be kept in the background. He comes very near overshadowing the other characters too much, as it is. And Shylock's character is *essentially tragic*: there is none of the proper timber of comedy in him.

It seeems but just to add, before passing on from Shylock, that in liberal-mindedness towards the Jews Shakespeare left the general sentiment of his age far behind him. Christopher Marlowe, who is justly regarded as the greatest of his contemporaries in dramatic poetry, made a vastly different showing in *The Rich Jew of Malta*, which was exceedingly popular; and, in doing so, probably struck much nearer the prevalent thoughts of the time. Charles Lamb aptly hits the difference between them in the following: —

"Shylock, in the midst of his savage purpose, is a man. His motives, feelings, resentments, have something human in them. 'If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?' Barabas is a mere monster, brought in with a large painted nose, to please the rabble. He kills in sport, poisons whole nunneries, invents infernal machines. He is just such an exhibition as, a century or two earlier, might have been played before the Londoners, 'by royal command,' when a general pillage and massacre of the Hebrews had been previously

resolved on in the Cabinet. It is curious to see a superstition wearing out. The idea of a Jew, which our pious ancestors contemplated with so much horror, has nothing in it now revolting."

Concluding Remarks.

The Merchant of Venice is justly distinguished among Shakespeare's dramas, not only for the general felicity of the language, but also for the beauty of particular scenes and passages. For descriptive power, the opening scene of Antonio and his friends is not easily rivalled, and can hardly fail to live in the memory of any one having an eye for such things. Equally fine in its way is the scene of Tubal and Shylock, where the latter is so torn with the struggle of conflicting passions; his heart now sinking with grief at the account of his fugitive daughter's expenses, now leaping with malignant joy at the report of Antonio's losses. The trial-scene, with its tugging vicissitudes of passion, and its hush of terrible expectation, — now ringing with the Jew's sharp, spiteful snaps of malice, now made musical with Portia's strains of eloquence, now holy with Antonio's tender breathings of friendship, and dashed, from time to time, with Gratiano's fierce jets of wrath, and fiercer jets of mirth, — is hardly surpassed in tragic power anywhere; and as it forms the catastrophe proper, so it concentrates the interest of the whole play. Scarcely inferior in its kind is the night-scene of Lorenzo and Jessica, bathed as it is in love, moonlight, "touches of sweet harmony," and soul-lifting discourse, followed by the grave moral reflections of Portia, as she approaches her home, and sees its lights, and hears its music. The bringing in of this passage of ravishing lyrical sweetness, so replete with the most soothing and tranquillizing effect,

close upon the intense dramatic excitement of the trial-scene, is such a transition as we shall hardly meet with but in Shakespeare, and aptly shows his unequalled mastery of the mind's capacities of delight. The affair of the rings, with the harmless perplexities growing out of it, is a well-managed device for letting the mind down from the tragic height whereon it lately stood, to the merry conclusion which the play requires. Critics, indeed, may easily quarrel with this sportive after-piece; but it stands approved by the tribunal to which Criticism itself must bow, — the spontaneous feelings of such as are willing to be made cheerful and healthy, without beating their brains about the *how* and *wherefore*. It is in vain that critics tell us we ought to "laugh by precept only, and shed tears by rule."

I ought not to close without remarking what a wide diversity of materials this play reconciles and combines. One can hardly realize how many things are here brought together, they are ordered in such perfect concert and harmony. The greatness of the work is thus hidden in its fine proportions. In many of the Poet's dramas we are surprised at the great variety of character: here, besides this, we have a remarkable variety of plot. And, admirable as may be the skill displayed in the characters individually considered, the interweaving of so many several plots, without the least confusion or embarrassment, evinces a still higher mastership. For, many and various as are the forms and aspects of life here shown, they all emphatically live together, as if they all had but one vital circulation.

LIBRARY OF

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUKE of Venice.
Prince of Morocco, } Suitors to Portia.
Prince of Aragon, }
ANTONIO, the Merchant of Venice.
BASSANIO, his Friend.
SOLANIO, } Friends to Antonio and
SALARINO, } Bassanio.
GRATIANO, }
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.
SHYLOCK, a Jew.
TUBAL, a Jew, his Friend.
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Servant to Shylock.
OLD GOBBO, Father to Launcelot.
LEONARDO, Servant to Bassanio.
BALTHAZAR, } Servants to Portia.
STEPHANO, }
PORTIA, a rich Heiress.
NERISSA, her Companion.
JESSICA, Daughter to Shylock.

Magnificos of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailer, Servants, and other Attendants.

SCENE, *partly at Venice and partly at Belmont.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, *and* SOLANIO.

Anto. In sooth,[1] I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,[2]

[1] "In *sooth*" is *truly* or in *truth*. *Soothsayer* is, properly, *truth-speaker*; formerly used of men supposed to be wise in forecasting things.

[2] To *come by* a thing is to *get possession of* it, to *acquire* it. So the phrase is much used in New England, or was, forty years ago.

What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit[3] sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies[4] with portly sail,—
Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood,[5]
Or, as it were, the pageants[6] of the sea,—
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Solan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,[7]
The better part of my affections would

[3] A *want-wit* is a *dunce*, *simpleton*, or *dunderhead*. *Wit* was continually used for *mind*, *judgment*, or *understanding*.

[4] *Argosies* are large ships either for merchandise or for war. The name was probably derived from the classical ship Argo, which carried Jason and the Argonauts in quest of the golden fleece.

[5] *Signior* is used by Shakespeare very much in the sense of *lord; signiory*, of *lordship*, meaning *dominion*. Thus, in *The Tempest*, i. 2, Prospero says of his dukedom: "Through all the *signiories* it was the first." *Burghers* are citizens. So, in *As You Like It*, ii. 1, the deer in the Forest of Arden, "poor dappled fools," are spoken of as "being native *burghers* of this desert city."

[6] *Pageants* were shows of various kinds, theatrical and others; from a word originally meaning, it is said, a high stage or scaffold. Pageants of great splendour, with gay barges and other paraphernalia, used to be held upon the Thames. Leicester had a grand pageant exhibited before Queen Elizabeth, on the water at Kenilworth-Castle, when she visited him there in 1575; described in Scott's *Kenilworth*. Perhaps our Fourth-of-July fireworks comes as near to it as any thing now in use.

[7] *Venture* is what is *risked;* exposed to "the peril of waters, winds, and rocks." — The Poet very often uses *forth* for *out*. So later in the scene: "To find the other *forth*." And elsewhere we have the phrases, "find his fellow *forth*," and "inquire you *forth*," and "hear this matter *forth*," and "feasting *forth* to-night," and "*bid forth* to supper"; that is, *invited out*.

Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still[8]
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind;
Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;[9]
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt,
Would make me sad.

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats;
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs,[11]
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream;
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks;[12]
And, in a word, but even now worth this,[13]

[8] Here, as often, *still* has the force of *always* or *continually*.

[9] *Roads* are *anchorages;* places where ships *ride* at anchor safely.

[10] *Dock'd in sand* is *stranded*. — Italian ships were apt to be named from Andrea Doria, the great Genoese Admiral.

[11] To *vail* is to *lower*, to *let fall*. So we have "*vail* your *stomachs*" for "*let fall* your *pride*," and "*vail* your regard upon a wrong'd maid." — The image is of a ship tilted over on one side, the other side up in the air, and the top-mast down in the sand.

[12] The Clarendon Editors aptly point out that Scott must have had these lines in mind in *Ivanhoe*, chapter x., where Isaac the Jew is made to say, "In the Gulf of Lyons I flung over my merchandise to lighten the ship, robed the seething billows in my choice silks, perfumed their briny foam with myrrh and aloes."

[13] Here the actor may be supposed to make a gesture importing bulk or largeness. The Poet often leaves his meaning to be thus interpreted.

And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought,
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Anto. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom[14] trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Anto. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let's say, you're sad,
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you're merry
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,[15]
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other[16] of such vinegar aspéct,
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.[17]

Solan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,

[14] *Bottom*, here, is a transport-ship or merchant-man.

[15] Janus, the old Latin Sun-god, who gave the name to the month of January, is here called *two-headed*, because he had two faces, one on either side of his head. There is also an allusion to certain antique two-faced images, one face being grave, the other merry, or a gloomy Saturn on one side, and a laughing Apollo on the other.

[16] *Other* for *others* was a very frequent usage, especially in antithetic connection with *some*, as in this instance.

[17] Nestor was the oldest and gravest of the Greek heroes in the Trojan war. The severest faces might justly laugh at what *he* should pronounce laughable.

Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented [18] me.
Anto. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you,
And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO.

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: [19] must it be so?
Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.
[*Exeunt* SALARINO *and* SOLANIO.
Loren. My Lord Bassanio, since you've found Antonio,
We two will leave you; but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.
Bass. I will not fail you.
Grati. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect [20] upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care.
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.
Anto. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage, where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

[18] *Prevented*, in old language, is *anticipated*. To *prevent* is literally to *go before*. So in the Prayer-Book, 17th Sunday after Trinity: "That thy grace may always *prevent* and follow us."

[19] *Strange* for *estranged*, *distant*, or *stranger-like*. Repeatedly so.

[20] *Respect*, in Shakespeare, often means *consideration*, or *concern*. So in *King Lear*, i. 1: "Since that *respects* of fortune are his love, I shall not be his wife." And so in North's Plutarch: "The only *respect* that made them valiant was, that they hoped to have honour."

Grati. Let me play the Fool:[21]
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,—
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;
And do[22] a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;[23]
As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle*,[24]
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!
O my Antonio! I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing; who, I'm very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.[25]

[21] To *play the Fool* is, in Gratiano's sense, to act the part of a jester, such as that of Touchstone in *As You Like It*, or the Clown in *Twelfth Night*.

[22] "And *who* do," of course. The Poet often omits the relative in such cases.

[23] *Conceit* was often used for *thought, conception, judgment*, or *understanding;* as also *opinion* for *reputation* or *character*.

[24] "As who should say" was a phrase in common use, meaning "as if any one should say," or "were saying."—A "Sir Oracle" is one who conceives himself to have oracular or prophetic wisdom; a *wiseacre*.

[25] Referring to the judgment pronounced in the Gospel against him who "says to his brother, Thou fool." The meaning, therefore, is, that if those who "only are reputed wise for saying nothing" should go to talking, they would be apt to damn their hearers, by provoking them to utter this reproach. A thing is often said to *do* that which it any way *causes to be*

I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool-gudgeon,[26] this opinion.—
Come, good Lorenzo.— Fare ye well, awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Loren. Well, we will leave you, then, till dinner-time.
I must be one of these same dumb-wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Grati. Well, keep me company but two years more,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Anto. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.[27]

Grati. Thanks, i' faith; for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.[28]

[*Exeunt* GRATIANO *and* LORENZO.

Anto. Is that any thing now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them; and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Anto. Well; tell me now, what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,

done. The Poet has many instances of such usage. So in *Hamlet*, iii. 4: "An act that *calls* virtue hypocrite." And so, in the text, *damn* is a *causative* verb: "would almost *cause* those *hearers* to be damned."

[26] That is, "Do not bait your hook with this melancholy to catch this worthless fish." *Gudgeon* was the name of a small fish very easily caught; and which none but *fools* would care to catch.

[27] *Gear* was often used of any business, matter, or affair in hand.

[28] Not good for the matrimonial market, unless she have the rare gift of silence to recommend her, or to make up for the lack of other attractions.

How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port [29]
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged [30]
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged. [31] To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
T' unburden all my plots and purposes,
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Anto. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight [32]

[29] "A more *swelling port*" is a grander and more imposing *appearance, deportment*, or *out-fit*. *Something* and *somewhat* were used indiscriminately. "A somewhat more swelling port" is the meaning. — *Grant*, in the next line, seems to be used, like *give*, with two objectives; or "would grant continuance *to*."

[30] That is, *complain of being* abridged, or *curtailed*. Here, as often, the infinitive, *to be*, is used gerundively, or like the Latin *gerund*, and so is equivalent to *of being*.

[31] *Gaged* is *pledged*. So in *1 Henry IV.*, i. 3: "That men of your nobility and power did *gage* them both in an unjust behalf."

[32] Arrows were variously formed for different ranges. A shaft "of the self-same flight" was an arrow made for shooting the same distance. — *His* for *its*, which was not then an accepted word, though it was just creeping into use. It does not once occur in our English Bible as originally printed in 1611. Instead of *its*, *his* is commonly used; as, "if the salt have lost *his* savour," and, "giveth to every seed *his* own body."

The self-same way with more advisèd[33] watch,
To find the other forth; and, by adventuring both,
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,[34]
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,[35]
That which I owe is lost; but, if you please
To shoot another arrow that self[36] way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt, —
As I will watch the aim, — or to find both,
Or[37] bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Anto. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;[38]
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost,
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then, do but say to me what I should do,
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest[39] unto it: therefore speak.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,[40]

[33] *Advisèd* is *deliberate, careful*, or *circumspect.* The Poet has it often so. And so Bacon says that judges ought to be "more *advised* than confident."

[34] *Childhood proof* is *childish instance* or *experiment;* a method he had used when a child. So the Poet has "*childhood* innocence."

[35] A youth wilful, or *headstrong, in expense* is the meaning.

[36] *Self* for *same* or *self-same;* a frequent usage. So in *King Lear*, i. 1: "I'm made of that *self* metal as my sister."

[37] *Or — or* for *either — or*, as also *nor — nor* for *neither — nor*, is very common in all English poetry.

[38] Here, as often, *circumstance* is *circumlocution*, or *talking round* a thing. instead of coming to the point at once.

[39] *Prest* is *prompt, ready;* from an old French word. Spenser has it repeatedly in the same sense. The Latin *præsto* is the origin of it.

[40] Meaning she is beautiful, and has what is better than beauty.

Of wondrous virtues: sometimes[41] from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.
Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued[42]
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renownèd suitors; and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio! had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,[43]
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate.

Anto. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money, nor commodity[44]
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently[45] inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make,
To have it of my trust, or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

[41] *Sometimes* and *sometime* were used indifferently, and often, as here, in the sense of *formerly* or *former.*

[42] *Nothing undervalued* is *not at all inferior in value.* So, later in this play, we have "ten times *undervalued* to tried gold." And *nothing* as a strong negative is very frequent.

[43] The language is awkward: "*as* one of them," we should say.

[44] *Commodity* is *merchandise*, any thing that might be pledged as security for a loan.

[45] *Presently* is *immediately* or *forthwith.* A common usage.

SCENE II. — *Belmont. A Room in* PORTIA'S *House.*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

Portia. By my troth,[1] Nerissa, my little body is a-weary of this great world.

Neris. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. It is no small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs,[2] but competency lives longer.

Portia. Good sentences,[3] and well pronounced.

Neris. They would be better, if well followed.

Portia. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood;[4] but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good-counsel the cripple. But this reasoning[5] is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word *choose!* I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of

[1] *Troth* is merely an old form of *truth.*

[2] *Superfluity*, that is, one who is rich and fares sumptuously, sooner *acquires* white hairs, or grows old. See page 79, note 2.

[3] *Sentences* for *maxims*, or axiomatic sayings; like Milton's "brief, *sententious* precepts."

[4] *Blood* here means the same as *temper*, a little after; and both are put for *passion* or *impulse* generally.

[5] *Reasoning* for *talk* or *conversation.* The Poet repeatedly has *reason*, both as noun and verb, in the same sense.

a living daughter curb'd by the will[6] of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

Neris. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy[7] men at their death have good inspirations: therefore, the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead — whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you — will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Portia. I pray thee over-name them, and, as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at[8] my affection.

Neris. First, there is the Neapolitan Prince.

Portia. Ay, that's a colt[9] indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation[10] to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Neris. Then is there the County Palatine.

Portia. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, *If you will not have me, choose.* He hears merry tales, and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher[11]

[6] The second *will* stands for what we call "will and *testament*."

[7] The sense of *holy*, here, is explained by the words *virtuous* and *good; upright* and *true*. Often so.

[8] *Level at* is *guess* or *infer*. The Poet uses *aim* in the same sense.

[9] An equivoque on *colt*, which was used for a wild, dashing, skittish youngster. The Neapolitans were much noted for horsemanship.

[10] *Appropriation* is used rather oddly here, — in the sense, apparently, of *addition*. The word does not occur again in Shakespeare.

[11] This was Heraclitus of Ephesus, who became a complete recluse, and retreated to the mountains, where he lived on pot-herbs. He was called "the weeping philosopher" because he mourned over the follies of mankind, just as Democritus was called "the laughing philosopher" because he laughed at them. Perhaps Portia has in mind the precept, "*Rejoice* with those that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Neris. How say you by[12] the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

Portia. (God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.) In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine: he is every man in no man: if a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering; he will fence[13] with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would[14] despise me, I would forgive him; for, if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Neris. What say you then to[15] Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Portia. You know I say nothing to him; for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor penny-worth in the English.[16] He is a proper[17]

[12] "*What* say you *of*, or *in reference to?*" *By* and *of* were often used indiscriminately. So in ii. 8, of this play: "That *many* may be meant *by* the fool multitude."

[13] To *fence* is to *manage the sword;* to practise the art of defence, as it is called. Skill in handling the sword was formerly an indispensable accomplishment of a gentleman.

[14] *Would* for *should;* the two being often used indiscriminately. So a little after: "You should refuse to perform."

[15] Here *to* is used like *by* in note 12. In the next speech, Portia plays upon the word, using it in the ordinary sense.

[16] "You will testify that I know very little of English."

[17] *Proper* is *handsome* or *fine-looking*. Commonly so in the Poet's time. In Hebrews, xi. 23, the parents of Moses are said to have hidden him, "because they saw he was a *proper* child."

man's picture; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show?[18] How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany,[19] and his behaviour everywhere.

Neris. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Portia. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal'd under for another.[20]

Neris. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Portia. Very vilely in the morning when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast. An[21] the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Neris. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Portia. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket;[22] for, if

[18] A *dumb-show* is an action or character exhibited to the eye only; something like what we call a *tableau.*

[19] *Doublet* was the name of a man's outside upper garment. — *Hose* was used for *trousers* or *stockings*, or both in one. — *Bonnet* and *hat* were used indifferently for a man's head-dress.

[20] To *seal* was to *subscribe;* as Antonio afterwards says, "I'll *seal* to such a bond." The principal sealed to a bond, his surety *sealed under.* The meaning therefore is, that the Frenchman became surety for another box of the ear, to be given in repayment of the first.

[21] *An* is an old equivalent for *if.* So used continually in Shakespeare's time. And so in the common phrase, "without any *ifs* or *ans.*"

[22] The *wrong* casket. So in *King John*, iv. 2: "Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste had falsely thrust upon *contrary* feet."

the Devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

Neris. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort[23] than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Portia. If I live to be as old as Sibylla,[24] I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Neris. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquess of Montferrat?

[23] *Sort* appears to be here used in the sense of *lot;* from the Latin *sors.* So in *Troilus and Cressida,* i. 3: "Let blockish Ajax draw the *sort* to fight with Hector." — "Your father's imposition" means the conditions imposed by your father.

[24] Shakespeare here turns the word *sibyl* into a proper name. That he knew it to be a generic, not an individual name, appears in *Othello,* iii. 4: "A sibyl, that had number'd in the world the Sun to course two hundred compasses, in her prophetic fury sew'd the work." Bacon, in his essay *Of Delays,* also uses the word as a proper name: "Fortune is like the market where, many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall; and again, it is sometimes like *Sibylla's* offer, which at first offereth the commodity at the full, then consumeth part and part, and still holdeth up the price." The particular Sibyl referred to by Portia is probably the Cumæan Sibyl, so named from Cumæ in Italy, where she had her prophetic seat. Apollo fell in love with her, and offered to grant any request she might make. Her request was that she might live as many years as she held grains of sand in her hand. She forgot to ask for the continuance of her beauty also, and so had a rather hard bargain of it.

Portia. Yes, yes; it was Bassanio: as I think, so was he call'd.

Neris. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Portia. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise. —

Enter a Servant.

How now! what news?

Serv. The four strangers[25] seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco; who brings word, the Prince his master will be here to-night.

Portia. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition[26] of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive[27] me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. — Sirrah, go before. —

Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *Venice. A public Place.*

Enter BASSANIO *and* SHYLOCK.

Shy. Three thousand ducats, — well.[1]

[25] An oversight, perhaps. There were *six* of them.

[26] *Condition* is *temper, disposition.* So used continually by Shakespeare, and other writers of his time.

[27] Devils were imagined and represented as of dark colour. So, in *Othello*, Iago says to Brabantio, "The Devil will make a grandsire of you," referring to the Moor's colour. — To *shrive* is to *absolve;* referring to the priestly act of confession and absolution.

[1] *Well* has here something of an interrogative force, and perhaps ought to be pointed interrogatively, — "Well?"

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months, — well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound, — well.

Bass. May you stead me?[2] Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound.

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good[3] man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Ho! no, no, no, no: my meaning, in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand moreover upon the Rialto, he hath a third to Mexico, a fourth for England; and other ventures he hath, squandered[4] abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves, — I mean, pirates: and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; — I think I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which

[2] Another instance of the indiscriminate use of words: *may* for *can* or *will*. — "*Stead* me" is *aid* me, or let me depend on you.

[3] Shylock means *good* in a business sense; of good *credit*.

[4] *Squandered* here is simply *scattered, dispersed;* a usage of the time.

your prophet the Nazarite conjured the Devil into.[5] I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto?—Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. [*Aside.*] How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for[6] he is a Christian;
But more, for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance[7] here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,[8]
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,

[5] Alluding to the permission given to the Legion of devils to enter into the herd of swine: St. Luke, viii. 33.—*Habitation* is used of the *body;* the dwelling-place, in this instance, of the devils.

[6] *For* was often used with the exact sense of our *because.*

[7] *Usance*, *usury*, and *interest* were all terms of precisely the same import in Shakespeare's time; there being then no such law or custom whereby *usury* has since come to mean the taking of interest above a certain rate. How the taking of interest, at whatever rate, was commonly esteemed, is shown in Lord Bacon's essay *Of Usury*, where he mentions the popular arguments against it: "That the usurer is the greatest Sabbath-breaker, because his plough goeth every Sunday; that the usurer breaketh the first law that was made for mankind after the fall, which was, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;' that *usurers should have orange-tawny bonnets because they do Judaize;* that it is against nature for money to beget money, and the like." The words in Italic show that usury was regarded as a badge of Judaism.

[8] Some explain this as a phrase of wrestling; others, of hunting. To *have one on the hip* was to have the advantage of him; as when a wrestler seized his antagonist by that part, or a hound a deer.

Which he calls interest. Cursèd be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store;
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But, soft![9] how many months
Do you desire? — [*To* ANTO.] Rest you fair,[10] good signior!
Your Worship was the last man in our mouths.

Anto. Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow,
By taking nor by giving of excess,[11]
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. — Is he yet possess'd[12]
How much we would?

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Anto. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; — three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and, let me see, — But hear you:
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

Anto. I do never use it.

[9] *Soft!* is an old exclamative, meaning about the same as *hold! stay!* or *not too fast!* Often used by Shakespeare.

[10] That is, "may you continue well!" or, "good health to you!" So in *As You Like It*, v. 1: "God rest you merry!" — "Your *Worship*" was a common title of deference, meaning somewhat less than "your *Honour*," in the Poet's time.

[11] *Excess*, here, has the exact sense of *interest*. If one lends a hundred dollars for a year at six per cent, he takes six dollars in *excess* of the sum lent.

[12] *Possess'd* is *informed;* a frequent usage. So later in the play: "I have *possess'd* your Grace of what I purpose."

Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep,—
This Jacob from our holy Abraham was
(As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)
The third [13] possessor; ay, he was the third,—
Anto. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shy. No, not take interest; not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did,
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings [14] which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
Anto. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of Heaven.
Was this inserted [15] to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior.
Anto. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul, producing holy witness,
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a godly outside falsehood [16] hath!
Shy. Three thousand ducats; — 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve, — then, let me see, the rate —

[13] The third, reckoning Abraham himself as the first. How Jacob's "wise mother wrought" is told in Genesis, xxvii.

[14] *Eanlings* are new-born lambs. — A *compromise* is a contract or mutual agreement. — See Genesis, xxx. 31–43.

[15] "Was this inserted *in Scripture?*" is the meaning, probably.

[16] *Falsehood* for *knavery*, as *truth* sometimes for *honesty*.

Anto. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding[17] to you?

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,
In the Rialto,[18] you have rated me
About my moneys, and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat, dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,[19]
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to,[20] then; you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have moneys: you say so;
You, that did void your rheum[21] upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money? is it possible,

[17] Shakespeare always has *beholding*, the active form, in the sense of *beholden*, the passive. Of course it means *indebted.*

[18] In this scene we have already had "*on* the Rialto," and "*upon* the Rialto." Concerning the place meant, Rogers thus speaks in one of the notes to his poem on Italy: "Rialto is the name, not of the bridge, but of the island from which it is called; and the Venetians say *il ponte di Rialto*, as we say Westminster-bridge. In that island is the exchange; and I have often walked there as on classic ground. In the days of Antonio and Bassanio it was second to none."

[19] *Gaberdine* was a long, coarse outer garment or frock. Caliban, in *The Tempest*, ii. 2, wears one big enough, it seems, to wrap both himself and Trinculo in.

[20] *Go to* is an old phrase of varying import, sometimes of reproach, sometimes of encouragement. *Hush up, come on, be off*, and *go ahead* are among its meanings.

[21] "*Eject* your *spittle*." *Rheum* was used indifferently of what issues from the mouth, the nose, and the eyes. — *Spurn*, in the next line, is *kick;* the same as *foot.*

A cur can lend three thousand ducats? or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
With 'bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this, —
Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?
Anto. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friend; — for when did friendship take
A breed[22] of barren metal of his friend? —
But lend it rather to thine enemy;
Who if he break,[23] thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.
Shy. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit[24]
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer.
Anto. This were kindness.
Shy. This kindness will I show:
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,

[22] *Breed*, here, is *interest;* that which is *bred* from the principal.

[23] This doubling of the subject, *who* and *he*, in relative clauses was common with all writers. Bacon has it very often. So in his *Advancement of Learning:* "*Which* though *it* be true, yet I forbear to note any deficiencies."

[24] *Doit* was a small Dutch coin, less in value than our cent."

3500

In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh,[25] to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

Anto. Content, in faith ; I'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me :
I'll rather dwell[26] in my necessity.

Anto. Why, fear not, man ; I will not forfeit it :
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. O, father Abraham, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect[27]
The thoughts of others ! — Pray you, tell me this :
If he should break his day,[28] what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture ?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour I extend this friendship :
If he will take it, so ;[29] if not, adieu ;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Anto. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

[25] The language is odd, and rather obscure. The sense will come thus : "Let the *forfeiture* of a pound of your flesh be *named* or *specified* as an *equivalent* for the debt."

[26] *Dwell* here has the sense of *continue* or *abide*.

[27] "Teaches them *to* suspect," of course. The Poet often thus omits *to* when it would defeat his rhythm.

[28] To *break his day* was the current phrase for breach of contract.

[29] The use of *so* for *very well*, or *so be it*, was very common.

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's:
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight;[30]
See to my house, left in the fearful guard[31]
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you. [*Exit.*

Anto. Hie thee, gentle Jew.
The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Anto. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Belmont. A Room in* PORTIA'S *House.*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of MOROCCO, *and his Train;* PORTIA, NERISSA, *and other of her* Attendants.

Moroc. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burning Sun,
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest,[1] his or mine.

[30] *Straight* for *straightway*, that is, *immediately*. Often so.

[31] "*Fearful* guard" is a guard not to be trusted, or that gives cause of fear. To *fear* was used in an active as well as a passive sense. So in the next scene: "This aspect of mine hath *fear'd* the valiant."

[1] *Red* blood is a traditionary sign of courage. Thus Macbeth calls his frightened servant a *lily-liver'd* boy; again, in this play, cowards are said to have *livers white as milk;* and an effeminate man is termed a *milksop*.

I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd[2] the valiant: by my love I swear,
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Portia. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;[3]
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But, if my father had not scanted me,
And hedged me by his will, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renownèd Prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

Moroc. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
To try my fortune. By this scimitar,—
That slew the Sophy,[4] and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,—
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the Earth,

[2] Hath *frightened* or *terrified*. See last note of preceding scene.

[3] Portia means that reason and judgment have a voice potential in her matrimonial thoughts. So in *Hamlet*, iv. 3: "The distracted multitude, who like not in their *judgment*, but their *eyes*." — *Nice*, here, is *dainty* or *fastidious*.

[4] A "History of the Wars between the Turks and Persians," translated from the Italian, was published in London in 1595; from which Shakespeare might have learned that "*Soffi*, an ancient word signifying a wise man," was "grown to be the common name of the Emperors of Persia." Ismael Sophi is said to have been the founder of what was called the Suffavian dynasty. The same potentate is twice referred to in *Twelfth Night*. — Solyman the Magnificent had an unfortunate campaign with the Persians in 1535.

Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while![5]
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man,[6] the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Portia. You must take your chance;
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear, before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage; therefore be advised.[7]

Moroc. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Portia. First, forward to the temple:[8] after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Moroc. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st[9] among men. [*Exeunt.*

[5] "Alas the while!" "Woe the while!" "Alack a day!" and "Woe worth the day!" were all phrases of the same or of similar import.

[6] If they try the question of which is the *braver* man by a game of dice. — Lichas was the servant or *page* of Hercules, who ignorantly brought to his master from Dejanira the poisoned shirt. Hercules was a descendant of Alceus, and so is called, in the Greek idiom, Alcides.

[7] *Advised*, again, for *cautious* or *considerate*. See page 87, note 33.

[8] That is, to the church, to take the oath mentioned just before, and described more particularly in the eighth scene of this Act. Bibles were not kept in private houses in the Poet's time; and such an oath had to be taken on the Bible.

[9] Here the force of the superlative in *cursed'st* retroacts on *blest;* so that the sense is *most blest or most cursed*. So in *Measure for Measure*, iv. 6: "The *generous* and *gravest* citizens."

SCENE II. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter LAUNCELOT GOBBO.

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, *Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,* or *good Gobbo,* or *good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.* My conscience says, *No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,* or, as aforesaid, *honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.*[1] Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: *Via!*[2] says the fiend; *away!* says the fiend; *for the Heavens,*[3] *rouse up a brave mind,* says the fiend, *and run.* Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, *My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,* — or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; — well, my conscience says, *Launcelot, budge not. Budge,* says the fiend: *budge not,* says my conscience. Conscience, say I, you counsel well; fiend, say I, you counsel well: to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark! is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be

[1] To scorn a thing with the heels appears to have been an old phrase for spurning or kicking at a thing. Shakespeare has the phrase again in *Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 4. Launcelot seems to be in chase of a quibble between the heels as used in kicking, and the heels as used in running.

[2] "*Via!*" from the Italian, was much used as a sort of exclamatory imperative, meaning *away!* or *go ahead!*

[3] *For the Heavens* was merely a petty oath. To make the fiend conjure Launcelot to do a thing for *Heaven's* sake, is a specimen of that "acute nonsense" which Barrow makes one of the species of wit.

ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence,[4] is the Devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very Devil incarnation;[5] and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run.

Enter old GOBBO, *with a basket.*

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside.*] O Heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind,[6] high-gravel-blind, knows me not. I will try confusions[7] with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry,[8] at the very next turning turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties,[9] 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can

[4] *Saving your reverence* is a sort of apologetic phrase for saying something coarse or profane; somewhat like our "If you will allow me to say so." "God save the mark" and "God bless the mark," are phrases of similar import.

[5] *Incarnation* is a blunder, perhaps intentional, for *incarnate.*

[6] *Sand-blind* is *dim-sighted* or *purblind.* The origin of the word seems unknown: perhaps it is a corruption of *semi-blind.* Of course Launcelot makes it the turning-point of a quibble.

[7] To *try conclusions* is the old phrase for to *try experiments.* It is not quite clear whether Launcelot's *confusions* is a blunder for *conclusions*, or whether it is an intentional parody on the old phrase, by way of joke.

[8] *Marry* was continually used as a colloquial intensive, having the force of *verily, indeed*, or *forsooth;* like the Latin *heracle* and *edepol.* It grew from a custom of swearing by the Virgin Mary.

[9] *Sonties* is most likely a corruption either of *saints* or of *sanctity. Saunctes* is an old form of *saints.*

you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? — [*Aside.*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters.[10] — [*To him.*] Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No *master*,[11] sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thanked, well to live.[12]

Laun. Well, let his father be what 'a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your Worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. *Ergo*, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman — according to Fates and Destinies, and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three, and such branches of learning — is, indeed, deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to Heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. [*Aside.*] Do I look like a cudgel, or a hovel-post, a staff, or a prop? — [*To him.*] Do you not know me, father?

[10] This seems to mean about the same as "I will have some fun out of him," or "I will come it over him."

[11] *Master*, which we have flattened into *mister*, formerly meant something as a title of respect. Shakespeare procured from the Heralds' College a coat-of-arms for his father, and had himself no right to be called *master* till he inherited the rank of gentleman thus conferred. Old Gobbo shrinks from giving his son the title, though he keeps calling him *master*, not knowing who he is.

[12] *Well to live* is an old phrase meaning the same as our *well off*. The old man is humorously made to contradict himself.

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy — God rest his soul! — alive, or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?[13]

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: [*Kneels, with his back to him.*] give me your blessing. Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; — a man's son may; but, in the end, truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.[14]

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man; and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. [*Taking hold of his back hair.*] Lord worshipp'd might He be![15]

[13] It was customary for young people to address any old man or woman as father or mother. Hence old Gobbo does not recognize his son on being called father by him.

[14] Launcelot is overflowing with quirks, and here purposely inverts the order of his words. He probably means "your child that was, your boy that is, your son that shall be."

[15] This expression does not occur again in Shakespeare. The Rev. John Hunter prints "Lord-worshipp'd might he be," and explains it, "He might be a lord worshipful"; meaning, apparently, that he has beard enough to receive the title of lordship. But I doubt both the printing and the explanation.

what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse [16] has on his tail.

Laun. [*Rising.*] It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of [17] his tail than I have of my face, when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

Laun. Well, well; but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest [18] to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famish'd in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground.[19] — O, rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, *with* LEONARDO *and other Followers.*

Bass. You may do so; but let it be so hasted, that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making; and desire Gratiano to come anon [20] to my lodging. [*Exit a* Servant.

[16] *Fill-horse* is *shaft*-horse, or horse that goes in the *shafts; fill* being a common form of *thill*.

[17] *Of* and *on* were often used indiscriminately.

[18] To *set up one's rest* was a phrase in frequent use for to make up one's mind, or to form a resolution. Said to be taken from the old game of primero, where it meant a determination to stand upon the cards one had in his hand.

[19] In Venice proper it was not easy to find ground enough to run away upon. Not much surface there but water.

[20] *Anon* is *directly* or *immediately*.

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your Worship!

Bass. Gramercy![21] Wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man, that would, sir,—as my father shall specify,—

Gob. He hath a great infection,[22] sir, as one would say, to serve,—

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and I have a desire—as my father shall specify,—

Gob. His master and he—saving your Worship's reverence—are scarce cater-cousins,[23]—

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is, that the Jew having done me wrong doth cause me—as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify[24] unto you,—

Gob. I have here a dish of doves[25] that I would bestow upon your Worship; and my suit is,—

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent[26] to myself, as your Worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet, poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both.—What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

[21] *Much thanks!* from the French *grand merci.*

[22] *Infection* is an honest blunder, probably for *inclination.*

[23] Old Gobbo seems to mean that his son and Shylock are not very near kindred, or do not love each other much. *Cater* is, most likely, from the French *quatre.*

[24] *Frutify* is a Gobboism for *fructify*, which appears to have been a sort of cant term for *holding forth;* in speech, that is.

[25] Upon this passage, Mr. C. A. Brown furnishes the following: "A present thus given, and in our days too, and of doves, is not uncommon in Italy. I myself have partaken there, with due relish, in memory of poor old Gobbo, of a dish of doves, presented by the father of a servant."

[26] Another Gobboism for *pertinent* or *appertaining.*

Gob. That is the very defect [27] of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd [28] thee; if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.[29]

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. — Go, father, with thy son. — Take leave of thy old master, and inquire
My lodging out. — [*To his followers.*] Give him a livery
More guarded [30] than his fellows'; see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. — Well, [*Looking on his palm.*] if any man in Italy have a fairer table! which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune! [31] Go to; here's a simple line of life! [32] here's a small trifle of wives! Alas, fifteen wives is nothing! aleven [33] widows and nine

[27] *Defect* for *effect;* another honest blunder.

[28] To *prefer* is, in old English, to *recommend*, and also to *promote*. Bassanio plays upon the two senses of the word.

[29] "He that hath the grace of God hath enough," or something such, appears to have been "the old proverb" in question.

[30] That is, ornamented. *Guards* were trimmings, facings, or other ornaments, such as gold and silver lace.

[31] Launcelot, applauding himself for his success with Bassanio, and looking into the palm of his hand, which by fortune-tellers is called the *table*, breaks out into the reflection: "Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table, which doth *not only* promise, *but* offer to swear upon a book, *that* I shall have good fortune."

[32] The line in the palm passing round the root of the thumb was called *the line of life;* that which begins near the root of the little finger, and extends towards the root of the fore-finger, was *the line of fortune*.

[33] *Aleven*, says Dyce, is "a vulgarism (and archaism) for *eleven*, — formerly not uncommon."

maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice; and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed;—here are simple 'scapes![34] Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear.—
Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. [*Exeunt* LAUNCELOT *and old* GOBBO.

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee;[35] go.

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

Grati. Where is your master?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*

Grati. Signior Bassanio,—

Bass. Gratiano!

Grati. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

Grati. Nay, you must not deny me: I must go
With you to Belmont.

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:
Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough,
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;

[34] Launcelot was an adept in the art of chiromancy, which in his time had its learned professors and practitioners no less than astrology. In 1558 was put forth a book by John Indagine, entitled "Brief introductions, both natural, pleasant, and also delectable, unto the Art of Chiromancy, or manual divination, and Physiognomy: with circumstances upon the faces of the Signs." "A simple line of life" written in the palm was cause of exultation to wiser ones than young Gobbo. "The edge of a feather-bed" is probably an absurd variation of the phrase "the edge of the sword."

[35] "*Hie* thee" is *hasten* thee, or *make haste.*

But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal.[36] Pray thee, take pain
T' allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit; lest, through thy wild behaviour,
I be misconstrued in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

Grati. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely;
Nay, more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat,[37] and sigh, and say amen;
Use all th' observance of civility,
Like one well-studied in a sad ostent[38]
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Grati. Nay, but I bar to-night; you shall not gauge[39] me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.

Grati. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest;
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

[36] *Liberal* for *wanton, reckless*, or free beyond the bounds of decorum. So the word was often used. Sometimes it is *licentious*.

[37] People used to keep their hats on while eating dinner. While grace was saying, they were expected to take the hat off and hold it over the eyes.

[38] That is, grave appearance; *show* of staid and serious behaviour. *Ostent* is very commonly used for *show* among old dramatic writers.

[39] *Gauge* is *measure* or *estimate*. — *Bar* is *except*.

SCENE III. — *The Same. A Room in* SHYLOCK'S *House.*

Enter JESSICA *and* LAUNCELOT.

Jess. I'm sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well; there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at[1] supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu; tears exhibit[2] my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! These foolish drops do somewhat drown my manly spirit: adieu!

Jess. Farewell, good Launcelot. — [*Exit* LAUNCELOT.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But, though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. — O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian, and thy loving wife! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. — *The Same. A Street.*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SOLANIO.

Loren. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging, and return
All in an hour.

[1] *Soon at* is an old phrase for *about.* So in *The Comedy of Errors*, i. 2: "*Soon at* five o'clock I'll meet with you upon the mart." Also in iii. 1: "And *soon at* supper-time I'll visit you."

[2] *Exhibit* is a Gobboism for *inhibit;* that is, *prevent* or *restrain.*

Grati. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.[3]

Solan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly[4] order'd,
And better, in my mind, not undertook.

Loren. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us. —

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter.*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up[5] this, it shall seem to signify.

Loren. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper that it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Grati. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Loren. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Loren. Hold here, take this. [*Giving him money.*] Tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her: speak it privately;
Go. [*Exit* LAUNCELOT.] — Gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of[6] a torch-bearer.

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

[3] Old language, meaning the same as *bespoken torch-bearers for us.*

[4] *Quaintly*, derived from the Latin *comptus*, was often used in the sense of *graceful, elegant*, or *ingenious.*

[5] *Break up* is old language for *break open.*

[6] The prepositions *of, with*, and *by*, were often used indifferently. So in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning:* "He is invested *of* a precedent disposition." See page 91, note 12.

Solan. And so will I.

Loren. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt* SALAR. *and* SOLAN.

Grati. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Loren. I must needs tell thee all: She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house;
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to Heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse, —
That she is issue to a faithless[7] Jew.
Come, go with me: peruse this, as thou goest.
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — *The Same. Before* SHYLOCK'S *House.*

Enter SHYLOCK *and* LAUNCELOT.

Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio: —
What, Jessica! — thou shalt not gormandize,
As thou hast done with me, — What, Jessica! —
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out. —
Why, Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!

Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Laun. Your Worship was wont to tell me I could do nothing without bidding.

[7] *Faithless* is simply *without faith, unbelieving.*

Enter JESSICA.

Jess. Call you? What is your will?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. — But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian.[1] — Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. — I am right loth to go;
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.[2]

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.[3]

Laun. And they have conspired together, — I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday[4] last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? — Hear you me, Jessica:

[1] In i. 3, Shylock says, "I will *not eat* with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." Did the Poet commit an oversight, or did he mean to put the Jew at odds with himself out of hatred to the Christian?

[2] *To-night* here means what we call *last* night, or *the past* night.

[3] *Reproach* is a Gobboism for *approach*. Shylock chooses to take him in the sense of *reproach*. And he expects Bassanio's reproach through the bankruptcy of Antonio. This may have some bearing on the question whether Shylock has any hand in getting up the reports of Antonio's "losses at sea."

[4] Easter-Monday. The origin of the name is thus explained by Stowe: "In the 34th of Edward III., the 14th of April, and the morrow after Easter-day, King Edward, with his host, lay before the city of Paris: which day was full dark of mist and hail, and so bitter cold, that many men died on their horses' backs with the cold. Wherefore unto this day it hath been called *Black-Monday*." — *Bleeding at the nose* was anciently considered ominous.

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum,
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,[5]
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street,
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;[6]
But stop my house's ears, — I mean my casements;
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. — By Jacob's staff,[7] I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night;
But I will go. — Go you before me, sirrah;
Say, I will come.

Laun. I'll go before you, sir. —
Mistress, look out at window for all this;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.[8] [*Exit* LAUN.

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

Jess. His words were, *Farewell, mistress;* nothing else.

Shy. The patch[9] is kind enough; but a huge feeder,
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat. Drones hive not with me;

[5] There has been some dispute whether *wry-neck'd fife* mean the instrument or the musician. Boswell cited a passage from Barnabe Rich's *Aphorisms*, 1618, which appears to settle the matter: "A *fife* is a *wry-neckt musician*, for he always looks away from his instrument."

[6] Alluding perhaps to the painted masks; but meaning, withal, an insinuation of duplicity, or doublefacedness.

[7] Hebrews, xi. 21: "By faith, Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

[8] The worth of a Jew's eye was the price with which the Jews used to buy themselves off from mutilation. The expression became proverbial, and was kept up long after its original meaning was lost.

[9] This use of *patch* sprang from the motley or *patched* dress worn by professional Fools. Hence a general term of contempt. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 2: "A crew of *patches*, rude mechanicals, that work for bread upon Athenian stalls."

Therefore I part with him; and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse. — Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps, I will return immediately.
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
Fast bind, fast find, —
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit.*

Jess. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter lost. [*Exit.*

Enter GRATIANO *and* SALARINO, *masked.*

Grati. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

Salar. His hour is almost past.

Grati. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly[10]
To seal love's bonds new-made than they are wont,
To keep obligèd faith[11] unforfeited!

Grati. That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with th' unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chasèd than enjoy'd.
How like a younker[12] or a prodigal
The scarfèd bark puts from her native bay,

[10] Classic fable imagined Venus and her son Cupid to ride through the air in a chariot drawn by doves. So in *The Tempest*, iv. 1: "I met her deity cutting the clouds towards Paphos, and her son *dove-drawn* with her."

[11] "*Obligèd* faith" is *plighted* faith, or faith made obligatory by solemn vows, as in marriage.

[12] *Younker* meant a *youngster*, or a young *gallant*.

Hugg'd and embracèd by the wanton wind!
How like a prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs, and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the wanton wind!

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO.

Loren. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;[13]
Not I, but my affairs have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Come, approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. — Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA *above, in Boy's clothes.*

Jess. Who are you? Tell me for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Loren. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jess. Lorenzo, certain; and my love indeed;
For whom love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Loren. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jess. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I'm glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:[14]
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For, if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

Loren. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jess. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

[13] "Long *abode*" is long *tarrying*, or long *delay*.
[14] Her *change* of dress; referring to her masculine attire.

They in themselves, good sooth, are too-too light.[15]
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.

Loren. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.[16]
But come at once;
For the close[17] night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

Jess. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[*Exit, from above.*

Grati. Now, by my hood, a Gentile,[18] and no Jew.

Loren. Beshrew me but[19] I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;
And true she is, as she hath proved herself;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
Shall she be placèd in my constant soul. —

Enter JESSICA, *below.*

What, art thou come? — On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[*Exit, with* JESSICA *and* SALARINO.

[15] A pun implied of light in a material and a moral sense.

[16] Another pun. Jessica means that she ought to be hidden; Lorenzo that her brightness is disguised.

[17] *Close* is *secret*, properly; here, what conceals or keeps dark.

[18] Gratiano is disguised with a mask, and in swearing by his hood he implies a likening of himself to a hooded monk swearing by his monastic character. — There is also a play on the word *gentile*, which signifies both a *heathen* and *one well-born*.

[19] Here *but* has the force of *if not*; — "Beshrew me *if I do not* love her." So in *Othello*, iii. 2: "Perdition catch my soul *but* I do love thee!" The exceptive *but*, as it is called; from *be out*. — *Beshrew me* is an old adjuration, equivalent to *confound me*, or *plague take me*.

Enter ANTONIO.

Anto. Who's there?

Grati. Signior Antonio?

Anto. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night; the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Grati. I'm glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. — *Belmont. A Room in* PORTIA'S *House.*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter PORTIA, *with the Prince of* MOROCCO, *and both their Trains.*

Portia. Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover
The several caskets to this noble Prince. —
Now make your choice.

Moroc. The first, of gold, which this inscription bears, —
Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;
The second, silver, which this promise carries, —
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt, —
Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath. —
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

Portia. The one of them contains my picture, Prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Moroc. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
I will survey th' inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.
Must give, — for what? for lead? hazard for lead?

This casket threatens: men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages.
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver, with her virgin hue?[1]
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
As much as he deserves! — Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving,
Were but a weak disabling[2] of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:
Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her:
From the four corners of the Earth they come,
To kiss this shrine,[3] this mortal-breathing saint.
Th' Hyrcanian deserts[4] and the vasty wilds

[1] Alluding to the silver light of the Moon, or rather to the virgin Diana, who was the Moon-goddess of old mythology.

[2] *Disabling* here has the sense of *disparaging* or *depreciating*.

[3] Christians often made long pilgrimages to kiss the shrine of a saint, that is, the place where a saint's bones were enshrined. And Portia, because she enshrines so much excellence, though still but "a traveller between life and death," is compared to such a hallowed shrine. *Shrine*, however, was sometimes used for *statue*, and so it may be here.

[4] A wilderness of indefinite extent south of the Caspian Sea. — *Vasty* is

Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of Heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation,
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.[5]
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?[6]
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stampèd in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;[7]
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. — Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

waste, *desolate*, or *void*. So Bacon has the noun in his *Advancement of Learning:* "Their excursions into the limits of physical causes have bred a *vastness* and solitude in that tract."

[5] That is, lead were unworthy even to enclose her cerements, or her shroud. The Poet elsewhere has *rib* in the sense of *enclose* or *protect:* in *Cymbeline*, iii. 1, he speaks of England as "Neptune's park, *ribbed* and paled in with rocks unscaleable and roaring waters."

[6] This is said to have been just the ratio of silver and gold in 1600. Now it is less than as one to sixteen. — *Undervalued* is *inferior in value*. See page 88, note 42.

[7] *Insculp'd upon* is *carved* or *engraved on the outside*. — The *angel* was so called from its having on one side a figure of Michael piercing the dragon. It is said to have been worth about ten shillings. Shakespeare has many punning allusions to it; as in *The Merry Wives*, i. 3: "She has all the rule of her husband's purse; he hath *legions of angels*." It seems to have held much the same place in English coinage as the sovereign does now.

Portia. There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*

Moroc. O Hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death,[8] within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[Reads.] *All that glisters is not gold,—*
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold,
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.[9]

Cold indeed, and labour lost;
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!—
Portia, adieu! I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.[10]

[*Exit with Train.*

Portia. A gentle riddance.—Draw the curtains, go:
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*Venice. A Street.*

Enter SALARINO *and* SOLANIO.

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;

[8] A human skull from which the flesh has all decayed.

[9] His courtship, which had been made warm by hope, is now chilled and frozen by an entire and hopeless failure.

[10] *Part* for *depart*. So the word was frequently used.

And in their ship I'm sure Lorenzo is not.

Solan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail;
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola[1] were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Solan. I never heard a passion[2] so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!—
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels,—two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stol'n by my daughter!—Justice! find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying,—his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Solan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd.
I reason'd[3] with a Frenchman yesterday,

[1] *Gondola* is the name of the vehicles in which people ride through the liquid streets of Venice. In Shakespeare's time Venice was the common resort of all who went abroad to see the world; as much so, perhaps, as Paris is now: so that to "have swam in a gondola" was a common phrase for having travelled.

[2] *Passion* for *passionate outcry;* the cause for the effect.

[3] *Reason*, again, in its old sense of *converse*. See page 89, note 5.

Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught:[4]
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

Solan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do't not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return: he answer'd, *Do not so;*
Slubber[5] *not business for my sake, Bassanio,*
But stay the very riping of the time:
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love.[6]
Be merry; and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently[7] *become you there.*
And even then, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible[8]
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Solan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out,

[4] *Fraught* for *freighted.* The Poet has it repeatedly so; also *raught* for *reached;* and many other such shortened preterites.

[5] To *slubber* is to do a thing carelessly. So in Fuller's *Worthies of Yorkshire:* "Slightly *slubbering* it over, doing something for show, and nothing to purpose."

[6] *Mind of love* probably means *loving mind,* or *mind full of love.* The Poet elsewhere has *mind of honour* for *honourable mind.*

[7] *Conveniently* is *properly* or *fittingly.*— *Ostents* for *shows* or *manifestations.* See page 113, note 38.

[8] *Sensible* for *sensitive* or *tender.* The Poet has it repeatedly so.

And quicken his embracèd heaviness [9]
With some delight or other.
Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*Belmont. A Room in* PORTIA'S *House.*

Enter NERISSA *with a* Servant.

Neris. Quick, quick, I pray thee ; draw the curtain straight :
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their Trains.*

Portia. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince ;
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized ;
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.
Arra. I am enjoin'd by oath t' observe three things :
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose ; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage ; lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.
Portia. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
Arra. And so have I address'd [1] me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope !—Gold, silver, and base lead.

[9] That is, *enliven* the *sadness* which he *clings to* or *cherishes.*

[1] *Address'd* is *prepared* or *made ready :* a common usage of the time. So in *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 4: "*Address* yourself to entertain them sprightly."

Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest, ha? let me see:
Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.
What many men desire! That *many* may be meant
By[2] the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond[3] eye doth teach;
Which pries not to th' interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.[4]
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump[5] with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitude.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees, and offices,
Were not derived corruptly! and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare![6]

[2] *By*, again, where we should use *of*. See page 91, note 12.

[3] Here, as commonly in Shakespeare, *fond* is *foolish*.

[4] Where it is exposed to every accident or mischance.

[5] *Jump* for *agree*. So in *The Taming of the Shrew*, i. 1: "Both our inventions meet and *jump* in one." And in *1 Henry the Fourth*, i. 2: "Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it *jumps* with my humour."

[6] "How many then *would keep their hats on*, who now stand *bareheaded* as before their masters or superiors." Another instance of the indiscriminate use of *should* and *would*.

How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin[7] of the times,
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
I will assume desert. — Give me a key,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*

Portia. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Arra. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it. —
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Portia. T' offend, and judge, are distinct offices,
And of opposèd natures.[8]

Arra. What is here?

The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgment is
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss.
There be fools alive, I wis,[9]

[7] *Ruin* here means *refuse* or *rubbish.*

[8] Portia is something of a lawyer, and she here has in mind the old legal axiom, that no man is a good judge in his own case.

[9] To *wis* is to *think*, to *suppose*. Nares derives it from the Saxon *wissan*. The preterite occurs in St. Luke, ii. 49: "*Wist* ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Silver'd o'er; and so was this.[10]
Take what wife you will to bed,[11]
I will ever be your head:[12]
So be gone, sir; you are sped.[13]

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two. —
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.[14]

[*Exeunt* ARRAGON *and Train.*

Portia. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.[15]

Neris. The ancient saying is no heresy:
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

[10] The idiot's portrait was enclosed in the *silver* casket, and in that sense was *silver'd o'er.*

[11] An apparent oversight of the Poet's: the Prince was sworn "never to woo a maid in way of marriage." Perhaps, though, he might woo and marry a *widow.*

[12] "You will always have a fool's head, whether married or not."

[13] That is "your case is decided, or *done for.*" So, in *Romeo and Juliet,* iii. 1, Mercutio, when he has received his death-wound from Tybalt, exclaims, "A plague o' both your Houses! I am *sped.*"

[14] *Wroth* is used in some of the old writers for *suffering.* So in Chapman's *22d Iliad:* "Born all to *wroth* of woe and labour." The original meaning of *wrath* is pain, grief, anger, any thing that makes one *writhe;* and the text exemplifies a common form of speech, putting the effect for the cause.

[15] They overreach themselves with their own shrewdness, as men are apt to do who undertake to be specially wise: —

Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man
Who is not wise at all.

Portia. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Portia. Here: what would my lord?[16]

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify th' approaching of his lord,
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets;[17]
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly Summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Portia. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou'lt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit[18] in praising him.—
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post[19] that comes so mannerly.

Neris. Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be! [*Exeunt.*

[16] A sportive reply to the Servant's "Where is *my lady?*" So, in *1 Henry IV.*, ii. 4, the Hostess says to Prince Henry, "O Jesu! *my lord*, the Prince!" and he replies, "How now, *my lady*, the hostess!"

[17] *Sensible regreets* are *feeling salutations;* or salutations that may be felt, such as valuable presents. See page 127, note 8.

[18] *High-day* is *holiday;* a time for finely-phrased speaking. So our Fourth of July is a high day; and we all know what Fourth-of-July eloquence is.

[19] *Post* is *postman*, and so a *quick* traveller.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter SOLANIO *and* SALARINO.

Solan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd, that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas; the Goodwins,[1] I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of[2] her word.

Solan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapp'd ginger,[3] or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband.[4] But it is true, without any slips of prolixity, or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, — O, that I had a title good enough to keep his name company! —

Salar. Come, the full stop.[5]

Solan. Ha, — what say'st thou? — Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

[1] The Goodwin Sands, as they were called, lay off the eastern coast of Kent. The name was supposed to have been derived from Earl Godwin, whose lands were said to have been swallowed up there in the year 1100. In *King John*, v. 5, it is said that the supplies expected by the French "are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands."

[2] Here, as often, *of* is equivalent to *in respect of*.

[3] To *knap* is to *snap*, or to break into small pieces. So in 46th Psalm of *The Psalter*: "He *knappeth* the spear in sunder."

[4] The presumption being that by that time she has got so used to the thing as not to mind it much.

[5] That is, finish the sentence; or "say on till you come to a period."

Solan. Let me say amen betimes, lest the Devil cross my prayer; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.—

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.[6]

Solan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledg'd; and then it is the complexion[7] of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damn'd for it.

Salar. That's certain, if the Devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Solan. Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

Shy. I say my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish.[8] But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto;—a beggar, that was used to come so smug[9] upon the mart. Let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer;—let

[6] A sly allusion, probably, to the dress in which Jessica eloped.

[7] *Complexion* was much used for *nature*, *natural disposition*, or *temperament*. So, in the old tale upon which *Hamlet* was partly founded, the hero is spoken of as being a "Saturnist by *complexion*."

[8] Rhenish wines are called white wines; named from the river Rhine.

[9] *Smug* is *brisk*, *gay*, or *spruce;* applied both to persons and things. Thus in *King Lear*, iv. 6: "I will die bravely, like a *smug* bridegroom: what, I will be jovial." And in *1 Henry IV.*, iii. 1: "Here the *smug* and silver Trent shall run in a new channel, fair and evenly."

him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; — let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hinder'd me half a million;[10] laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge: if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.[11]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house, and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Solan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be match'd, unless the Devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt* SOLANIO, SALARINO, *and* Servant.

[10] "Hinder'd me to the extent of half a million"; ducats, of course.

[11] "I will work mighty hard rather than fail to surpass my teachers."

Enter TUBAL.

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: — two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. — I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? — Why, so; — and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no[12] ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; no sighs but o' my breathing; no tears but o' my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa, —

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. — hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God! Is it true, is it true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news! ha, ha! — Where? in Genoa?

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stick'st a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

[12] This doubling of the negative occurs continually both in Shakespeare and in other authors of that time. Good grammar then.

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise;[13] I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer;[14] bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *Belmont. A Room in* PORTIA'S *House.*

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and* Attendants. *The caskets are set out.*

Portia. I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me — but it is not love —

[13] The turquoise was held precious not only for its rarity and beauty, but for the magical properties ascribed to it. Among other virtues, it was supposed to have the power of reconciling man and wife, and of forewarning the wearer, if any danger approached him. It was also thought to be a very compassionate stone; changing its colour, and looking pale and dim, if the wearer were ill.

[14] To *fee* an officer, or a lawyer, is to engage him by paying for his services in advance. Acceptance of such payment *binds* him.

I would not lose you ; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But, lest you should not understand me well, —
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, —
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn ;
So will I never be : so may you miss me ;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlook'd [1] me, and divided me ;
One half of me is yours, th' other half yours, —
Mine own, I would say ; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours ! O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights !
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,[2]
Let fortune go to Hell for it, not I.
I speak too long ; but 'tis to peise [3] the time,
To eke it, and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

Bass. Let me choose ;
For, as I am, I live upon the rack.

Portia. Upon the rack, Bassanio ! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

[1] *O'erlook'd* is *eye-bitten ;* that is, *bewitched* or *fascinated.*

[2] That is, *if* it prove so, or *should* it prove so. — The meaning is, "If the event should prove that I, who am really yours in heart, am not to be yours in fact, or in hand, let the punishment fall upon fortune for misdirecting your choice, and not upon me."

[3] To *peise* is from *peser*, French ; to *weigh* or *poise.* So in *Richard III.:* "Lest leaden slumber *peize* me down to-morrow." In the text it is used figuratively for to *suspend*, to *retard ;* as *loading* a thing in motion naturally makes it go slower.

Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love:[4]
There may as well be amity and league
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.
Portia. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforcèd do speak any thing.[5]
Bass. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.
Portia. Well then, confess, and live.
Bass. Confess, and love,
Had been the very sum of my confession.
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance![6]
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.
Portia. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.—
Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof.—
Let music sound, while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music: that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him.[7] He may win,

[4] The Poet often has *doubt* for *fear* or *suspect;* here he has *fear* in the sense of *doubt.* "Fear the *not* enjoying of my love."

[5] It is pleasant to find Shakespeare before his age in denouncing the futility of this barbarous method of extorting truth. He was old enough to remember the case of Francis Throckmorton in 1584; and that of Squires in 1598 was fresh in his mind. — *Clarendon Editors.*

[6] Doubtless many a poor man whose office it was to work the rack, and whose heart had not been burnt to a cinder by theological rancour, had pity on the victim, and whispered in his ear "answers for deliverance"; prompting him to speak what might suffice for stopping the torture.

[7] Of course the allusion is to the habit, which the swan was imagined to have, of singing herself through the process of dying, or of going out, *fading*, in music. The closing part of the allusion supposes the bird to sing her life away while floating passively on the water.

And what is music then? then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crownèd monarch: [8] such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence,[9] but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster: [10] I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleareèd visages, come forth to view
The issue of th' exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much, much more dismay
I view the fight, than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself.*

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,[11]
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished? [Reply.

[8] At English coronations, the act of putting on the crown was signalled by a joyous flourish of trumpets; whereupon the whole assembly were to bow their homage to the sovereign.

[9] *Presence* for *nobility of bearing* or *deportment.*

[10] The story, as told by Ovid, is, that Hesione, daughter of the Trojan King, being demanded by the Sea-monster, and being bound to a rock, Hercules slew the monster, and delivered her. Bassanio "goes with much more love," because Hercules went, not from love of the lady, but to gain the reward offered by Laomedon.

[11] This song is very artfully conceived, and carries something enigmatical or riddle-like in its face, as if on purpose to suggest or hint darkly the way to the right choice. The clew, however, is such as to be seized only by a man whose heart is thoroughly right in the matter he goes about. *Fancy*, as here used, means, apparently, that illusive power or action of the mind

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.
All. *Ding, dong, bell.*

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still [12] deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnèd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve [13] it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stayers [14] of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk! [15]

which has misled the other suitors, who, as Portia says, "have the wisdom by their wit to lose." And the illusion thus engendered in the eyes, and fed with gazing, dies just there where it is bred, as soon as it is brought to the test of experience by opening the wrong casket. The riddle evidently has some effect in starting Bassanio on the right track, by causing him to distrust such shows as catch the fancy or the eye, — the glitter of the gold and silver caskets.

12 *Still*, again, in its old sense of *always* or *continually*.

13 *Approve* it is, simply, *prove* it, or *make* it *good*. This use of the word is very frequent in Shakespeare.

14 *Stayers* in the sense of *props*, *supports*, or *stays*. The word is to be pronounced, here, as one syllable; as *cowards* also is.

15 Cowards were commonly spoken of as having white livers. Shakespeare has *lily-livered* and *milk-livered* in the same sense; and Falstaff

And these assume but valour's excrement,[16]
To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;[17]
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:[18]
So are those crispèd snaky golden locks,
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposèd fairness,[19] often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.[20]
Thus ornament is but the guilèd[21] shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian feature;[22] in a word,

instructs us that "the second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice."

[16] *Excrement*, from *excresco*, is used for every thing which appears to grow or vegetate upon the human body, as the hair, the beard, the nails.

[17] The meaning, here, is not very obvious; but the words are probably to be construed in the light of what follows. It would seem that false hair, "the golden tresses of the dead," was purchased at so much an ounce; and the more one had of it, the *vainer* one was.

[18] Another quibble upon *light*. See page 121, note 15. Here, however, it is between *light* as opposed to *heavy*, and *light* in the sense of *vanity*.

[19] That is, *imagined* or *imputed* fairness. — The Poet has often expressed a strong dislike of the custom, then in vogue, of wearing false hair. His 68th Sonnet has a passage very like that in the text: —

> Thus in his cheek the map of days outworn,
> When beauty lived and died as flowers do now;
> Before the golden tresses of the dead,
> The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
> To live a second life on second head;
> Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay.

[20] "The skull *being* in the sepulchre." Ablative absolute.

[21] *Guilèd*, if it be the right word, must here mean *seductive*, *beguiling*, or *full of guile;* the passive form with the active sense. See Critical Notes.

[22] *Feature* is used repeatedly by Shakespeare for *form*, *person*, or *personal*

The seeming truth which cunning times put on
T' entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas,[23] I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou stale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Portia. How all the other passions fleet to air,—
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess!
I feel too much thy blessing; make it less,
For fear I surfeit!

Bass. [*Opening the leaden casket.*] What find I here?
Fair Portia's counterfeit![24] What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar

appearance in general. So in *The Two Gentlemen*, ii. 4: "He is complete in *feature* as in mind." Also in *King Lear*, iv. 2: "Thou changèd and sex-cover'd thing, for shame, bemonster not thy *feature!*" And in *Cymbeline*, v. 5: "For *feature*, laming the shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva, postures beyond brief nature"; where *shrine* is *statue* or *image*.

[23] Midas was a mythological personage who asked of God Bacchus that whatever he touched might be turned into gold. The request being granted, and all his food turning to gold in the eating, he implored Bacchus to revoke the favour.

[24] *Counterfeit* was used for *likeness* or *portrait*. So in *The Wit of a Woman*, 1634: "I will see if I can agree with this stranger for the drawing of my daughter's *counterfeit*." And Hamlet calls the pictures he shows to his mother "the *counterfeit* presentment of two brothers."

Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider; and hath woven
A golden mesh t' entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes!
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his,
And leave itself unfurnish'd.[25] Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent[26] and summary of my fortune: —

You that choose not by the view
Chance as fair, and choose as true:
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this,
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. — Fair lady, by your leave; [*Kissing her.*
I come by note, to give and to receive.[27]
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,

[25] Unfurnished with a *companion*. In Fletcher's *Lover's Progress*, Alcidon says to Clarangé, on delivering Lidian's challenge, which Clarangé accepts, —

You are a noble gentleman.
Wil't please you bring a friend? we are two of us,
And pity either, sir, should be *unfurnish'd*.

[26] *Continent*, in old English, is simply that which *contains* something.

[27] "I come in accordance with the written direction to give a kiss and to receive the lady."

Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Portia. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;
That, only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account: but the full sum of me
Is sum of — something;[28] which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised:
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; then happier in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord[29]
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself,

[28] The dash before *something* is to indicate that the fair speaker hesitates for a term with which to describe herself modestly, yet without any affectation of modesty.

[29] The *lord* of a thing is, properly, the *owner* of it; hence the word is applicable to a woman as well as to a man.

Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words;
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins:
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a belovèd prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleasèd multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Neris. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by, and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry good joy: Good joy, my lord and lady!

Grati. My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:[30]
And, when your Honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Grati. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;[31]

[30] "You have so much joy yourselves in each other, that you cannot grudge any to me."

[31] We are not to understand by this that Nerissa is merely a servant-maid to Portia: she holds the place of companion or friend, and Portia all

You loved, I loved; for intermission[32]
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For, wooing here, until I swet again,
And swearing, till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, — if promise last, —
I got a promise of this fair one here,
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Portia. Is this true, Nerissa?

Neris. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Grati. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall[33] be much honour'd in your marriage.

Grati. But who comes here? Lorenzo, and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Solanio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* SOLANIO.

Bass. Lorenzo and Solanio, welcome hither!
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. — By your leave,
I bid my very[34] friends and countrymen,

along treats her as such. They are as nearly equals in rank as Bassanio and Gratiano are, who are a pair of *friends*, not master and servant. Nor does it conflict with this, that Gratiano speaks of Portia as "her mistress;" for he is in a position that requires him to plead his present cause with a good deal of modesty and deference, lest he should seem to have abused his privilege of accompanying Bassanio on this loving voyage.

[32] *Intermission* is *pause* or *delay*. Gratiano means, apparently, that his own marriage is not to be put off any more than Bassanio's. The logic in *for* is not very evident; but I suspect *for* is here used with the simple force of *and*, as it often is in the Bible.

[33] *Shall* for *will;* the two being often used indiscriminately.

[34] *Very*, here, is *real* or *true;* like the Latin *verus*.

Sweet Portia, welcome.

Portia. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Loren. I thank your Honour. — For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But, meeting with Solanio by the way,
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Solan. I did, my lord,
And I have reason for't. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [*Gives* BASSANIO *a letter.*

Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Solan. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.

Grati. Nerissa, cheer yond stranger; bid her welcome. —
Your hand, Solanio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

Solan. Would you had won the fleece that he hath lost!

Portia. There are some shrewd[35] conténts in yond same paper,
That steal the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution[36]
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse! —
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,

[35] The proper meaning of *shrewd* is *sharp* or *biting;* hence *painful.*

[36] *Constitution* for *constitutional temper.* Bassanio is naturally cheerful and lively.

And I must have the half of any thing
That this same paper brings you.
Bass. O sweet Portia!
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper. Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, — I was a gentleman:
And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state[37] was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere[38] enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady, —
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. — But is it true, Solanio?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?
Solan. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should[39] appear that, if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know

[37] *State* and *estate* were used interchangeably. So, a little before, we have *estate* for *state*, that is, *condition*: "Will show you his *estate*."

[38] Here, as often, *mere* is *absolute*, *entire*. So in *Othello*, ii. 2: "Certain tidings importing the *mere* perdition of the Turkish fleet."

[39] *Should*, again, where present usage requires *would*.

A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound [40] a man:
He plies the Duke at morning and at night;
And doth impeach the freedom of the State,
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port,[41] have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious [42] plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

Jess. When I was with him, I have heard him swear,
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
If law, authority, and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

Portia. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied [43] spirit
In doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Portia. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

[40] To *ruin*, to *destroy*, is the more common meaning of to *confound*, in Shakespeare and the writers of his time.

[41] Of greatest *importance* or *consequence*. See page 86, note 29.

[42] *Envious* for *malicious*. So the word was constantly used. Also *envy* for *malice* or *hatred*.

[43] *Condition'd* is *tempered* or *disposed*. See page 94, note 26. — The force of the superlative, *best*, is continued over *unwearied*, in the sense of *most*. So in *The Witch* of Middleton, i. 2: "Call me the *horrid'st* and *unhallow'd* thing that life and nature tremble at." See, also, page 104, note 2.

Portia. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,[44]
Before a friend of this description[45]
Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over;
When it is paid, bring your true friend along:
My maid Nerissa and myself, meantime,
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;[46]
Since you are dear-bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [Reads.] *Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since, in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are clear'd between you and I, if I*

[44] The Venetian ducat, in or near the Poet's time, is said to have been equivalent to nearly $1.53 of our money. At this rate, Portia's 36,000 ducats would have equalled about $55,000. And money was worth some six times as much then as it is now! — The coin took its name from the legend inscribed upon it: "Sit tibi, Christe, datus, quem tu regis, iste *ducatus*."

[45] Here, as often in this play, the ending *-tion* is properly dissyllabic, and was so pronounced in the Poet's time. The same with *complexion*, in ii. 1; and with *occasions*, in i. 1. Also with *-tian* in *Christian*, i. 3; and with *-cean* in *ocean*, i. 1. This is particularly the case when such a word ends a verse. Nevertheless I would not have the pronunciation used now, save when the rhyme requires it, as is very often the case in Spenser.

[46] *Cheer* is *look* or *countenance;* from the French *chere*. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 2: "All fancy-sick she is, and pale of *cheer*."

might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Portia. O love, despatch all business, and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste; but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, *and* Jailer.

Shy. Jailer, look to him: tell not me of mercy. —
This is the fool that lends out money gratis. —
Jailer, look to him.

Anto. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I've sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The Duke shall grant me justice. — I do wonder,
Thou naughty jailer, that thou art so fond[1]
To come abroad with him at his request.

Anto. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.
[*Exit* SHYLOCK.

[1] *Fond*, again, in its old sense of *foolish*.

Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept[2] with men.
Anto. Let him alone:
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.
Salar. I am sure, the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Anto. The Duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity[3] that strangers have
With us in Venice: if it be denied,
'Twill much impeach the justice of the State,
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations.[4] Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so 'bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor. —

[2] *Kept*, here, is *dwelt* or *lived;* a common usage of the time.

[3] That is, *because of* the *commercial intercourse*. *For* is often thus equivalent to *because of*. — Thomas, in his *History of Italy*, 1561, has the following: "Al men, specially strangers, haue so muche libertee there, that though they speake very ill by the Venetians, so they attempt nothinge in effect against theyr astate, no man shal control theim for it. And generally of all other thynges, so thou offende no man priuately, no man shal offende the: whyche vndoubtedly is one principall cause, that draweth so many straungers thither."

[4] Antonio was one of the citizens, while Shylock was reckoned among the strangers of the place. And since the city was benefited as much by the trade and commerce of foreigners as of natives, justice evidently required that the law should give equal advantages to them both. But to stop the course of law in behalf of citizens against strangers, would be putting the latter at a disadvantage, and so would clearly impeach the justice of the State.

Well, jailer, on. — Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. — *Belmont. A Room in* PORTIA'S *House.*

Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHAZAR.

Loren. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit[1]
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But, if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover[2] of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.
Portia. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time[3] together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion[4]
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty!
This comes too near the praising of myself;

[1] *Conceit*, again, for *conception*, *idea*, or *judgment*. See page 84, note 23.
[2] *Lover* for *friend*, the two words being formerly synonymous.
[3] *Associate*, or *keep company*, and *spend* the time.
[4] *Proportion* sometimes has the sense of *equality* or *resemblance*.

Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry [5] and manage of my house
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
I have toward Heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,[6]
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

Loren. Madam, with all my heart,
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Portia. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
So, fare you well, till we shall meet again.

Loren. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jess. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Portia. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica. —

[*Exeunt* JESSICA *and* LORENZO.

Now, Balthazar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

[5] The *ordering*. The literal meaning of *husband* is *house-band*, which is here implied. Of course *manage* is *management*.

[6] *Imposition* is any charge, task, or duty *imposed* or *enjoined*. — Here, as also in *proportion* and *contemplation*, the ending is properly dissyllabic. Also, in *companions*. See page 151, note 45.

And use thou all th' endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed [7]
Unto the Tranect,[8] to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed. [*Exit.*

Portia. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

Neris. Shall they see us?

Portia. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With what we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace;
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride; and speak of frays,
Like a fine-bragging youth; and tell quaint [9] lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;

[7] With the celerity of imagination. So in the Chorus preceding the third Act of *Henry V.*: "Thus with *imagined* wing our swift scene flies."

[8] This word evidently implies the name of a place where the passage-boat set out, and is in some way derived from *tranare*, to draw. No other instance of its use has yet occurred. The Poet had most likely heard or read of the place on the Brenta, about five miles from Venice, where a boat was *drawn* over a dam by a crane.

[9] *Quaint* is *ingenious*, *clever*, or *cunning*. See page 115, note 4.

I could not do withal: [10] then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them.
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell;
That men shall swear I've discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I've within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,[11]
Which I will practise.—
But come; I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park-gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — *The Same. A Garden.*

Enter LAUNCELOT *and* JESSICA.

Laun. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise ye, I fear you.[1] I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation[2] of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of base hope neither.

Jess. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Laun. Marry, you may partly hope that you are not the Jew's daughter.

[10] A phrase of the time, signifying *I could not help it.* So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Little French Lawyer*, Dinant, who is reproached by Clerimont for not silencing the music which endangered his safety, replies: "*I cannot do withal;* I have spoke and spoke; I am betrayed and lost too."

[11] *Jack* was a common term of contempt.

[1] Fear *for* you, or on your account. So in *Richard III.*, i. 1: "The king is sickly, weak, and melancholy, and his physicians *fear* him mightily."

[2] *Agitation* is a Gobboism for *cogitation.*

Jess. That were a kind of base hope, indeed: so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Laun. Truly, then, I fear you are damned both by father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis,[3] your mother: well, you are gone both ways.

Jess. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enough before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

Loren. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

Jess. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in Heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says you are no good member of the commonwealth; for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

Loren. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots.[4] — Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Loren. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then, bid them prepare dinner.

[3] This refers to a proverbial saying which has been traced back as far as to Saint Augustine: "Ne iterum quasi fugiens Charybdim, in Scyllam incurras." Halliwell quotes an old saying to the same purpose: "He got out of the muxy and fell into the pucksy."

[4] A shrewd proof that the Poet rightly estimated the small wit, the puns and verbal tricks, in which he so often indulges.

Laun. That is done too, sir ; only, *cover* is the word.

Loren. Will you cover, then, sir?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither ; I know my duty.[5]

Loren. Yet more quarreling with occasion ![6] Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning : go to thy fellows ; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in ; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered ; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern.

[*Exit* LAUNCELOT.

Loren. O, dear discretion, how his words are suited !
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words ; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter.[7] — How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion :
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jess. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life ;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,

[5] Launcelot is playing upon the two senses of *cover*, which was used both for setting the table and for putting on the hat.

[6] That is, going *at odds* or *in discord* with the occasion. Launcelot's punning is irrelevant to the matter in hand ; *out of time*.

[7] To *defy* was often used for to *renounce*, *forsake*, or *give up*. So in *1 Henry the Fourth*, i. 3 : "All studies here I solemnly *defy*, save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke." Shakespeare alludes, no doubt, to the habit, which then infected all classes, of sacrificing their matter, or letting it go, in their fondness of verbal trickery and trifling, or in their chase after puns and plays upon words. — *Tricksy* is *artful*, *adroit*, or what we might call *smartish*.

He finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth;
And if on Earth he do not merit it,[8]
In reason he should never come to Heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Loren. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jess. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Loren. I will anon: first let us go to dinner.

Jess. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.[9]

Loren. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jess. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Venice. A Court of Justice.*

Enter the DUKE; *the* Magnificoes; ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALARINO, SOLANIO, *and Others.*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Anto. Ready, so please your Grace.

Duke. I'm sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch

[8] *It* refers to *blessing*, in the second line above.

[9] An equivoque on *stomach*, which is used in the two senses of inclination to praise and of appetite for food.

Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

Anto. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify[1]
His rigorous course ; but since he stands obdúrate,
And that[2] no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's[3] reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury ; and am arm'd
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

Solan. He's ready at the door : he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.—
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice[4]
To the last hour of act ; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse,[5] more strange
Than is thy strange-apparent cruelty :
And where[6] thou now exact'st the penalty,—
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,—
Thou wilt not only loose[7] the forfeiture,

[1] To *abate*, to *assuage*, to *mitigate*, are old senses of *to qualify*.

[2] The old language in full was *since that;* and Shakespeare, in a second clause, often uses *that*, instead of repeating *since*. Here we should write "since—and *since*." It was the same with *if*, *when*, *though*, and some others. *If that* has occurred several times in this play.

[3] *Envy* in its old sense of *malice* or *hatred*.

[4] "Keepest up this *manner* or *appearance* of malice."

[5] *Remorse*, in Shakespeare, generally means *pity* or *compassion*. The usage was common.

[6] *Where* for *whereas;* the two being used interchangeably.

[7] *Loose*, here, has the sense of *remit* or *release*.

But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety[8] of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back;
Enough to press a royal merchant[9] down,
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd[10] your Grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.[11]
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that.
But, say, it is my humour; is it answer'd?[12]

[8] *Moiety* is, properly *half*, but was used for any portion.

[9] "*Royal* merchant" is a complimentary phrase, to indicate the wealth and social standing of Antonio. In the Poet's time, Sir Thomas Gresham was so called, from his great wealth, and from his close financial relations with the Court and the Queen. The term was also applied to great Italian merchants, such as the Giustiniani and the Grimaldi, the Medici and the Pazzi, some of whom held mortgages on kingdoms and acquired the titles of princes for themselves.

[10] *Possess'd*, again, in its old sense of *informed*.

[11] Perhaps the Poet had London in his mind, which held certain rights and franchises by royal charter, and was liable to have its charter revoked for an act of flagrant injustice.

[12] The meaning seems to be, "Suppose I should say," or, "What if I should say it is my humour; is that an answer?" — In the Poet's time, *humour* was used, much as *conscience* was at a later period, to justify any eccentric impulse of vanity, opinion, or self-will, for which no common

What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned ![13] What, are you answer'd yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;[14]
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain themselves for affection.[15]
Masters of passion sway it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes.[16] Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a wauling bag-pipe,[17] but of force [18]
Must yield to such inevitable shame

ground of reason could be alleged. Thus, if a man had an individual crotchet which he meant should override the laws and conditions of our social being, it was his *humour*. Corporal Nym is a burlesque on this sort of affectation.

[13] *Baned* is *poisoned;* killed with what is called *ratsbane*.

[14] A pig's head as roasted for the table. In England, a boar's head is served up at Christmas, with a lemon in its mouth. So in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, iii. 2: "He could not abide to see a pig's head gaping: I thought your Grace would find him a Jew." And in Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, ii. 2: "And they stand gaping like a roasted pig."

[15] Here, again, *for* is equivalent to *because of*. See page 153, note 30. — *Affection*, in this place, means much the same as *impulse;* more properly, the state of *being affected* or *moved* by any external object or impression.

[16] An axiomatic saying, brought in here with signal aptness. Even the greatest masters of passion move and rule it according as it is predisposed: so, for instance, in the dramatic delineation of passion; and the secret of Shakespeare's unequalled power lies partly in that fact: hence, in his work, the passions are rooted in the persons, instead of being merely pasted on.

[17] "*Wauling* bag-pipe" evidently means the same as "when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose." The effect in question is produced by the *sound* of the bag-pipe, and not by the *sight*, as in the instances of the gaping pig and of the cat.

[18] *Of force* is the same as *perforce; of necessity*, or *necessarily*.

As to offend, himself being offended;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?
Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
T' excuse the current of thy cruelty.
Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.
Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?
Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.
Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?
Anto. I pray you, think you question[19] with the Jew.
You may as well go stand upon the beach,
And bid the main[20] flood 'bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But, with all brief and plain conveniency,
Let me have judgment,[21] and the Jew his will.
Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

[19] *Question*, here, like *reason* before, has the sense of *talk* or *converse*. The usage was common, and Shakespeare has it repeatedly.

[20] *Great, strong, mighty* are among the old senses of *main*.

[21] "Let the sentence proceed against me with such promptness and directness as befits the administration of justice." The Poet often uses *brief* for *quick* or *speedy*.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them : I would have my bond.
Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?
Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer,
The slaves are ours. So do I answer you :
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought, 'tis mine, and I will have it :
If you deny me, fie upon your law !
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment : answer ; shall I have it?
Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learnèd Doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.
Solan. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the Doctor,
New come from Padua.
Duke. Bring us the letters ; call the messenger.
Bass. Good cheer, Antonio ! What, man, courage yet !
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.
Anto. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death : the weakest kind of fruit

Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me:
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, *dressed like a Lawyer's Clerk.*

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?
Neris. From both, my lord: Bellario greets your Grace.
[*Presents a letter.*
Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
Shy. To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.
Grati. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul,[22] harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?
Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Grati. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.[23]
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,[24]
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

[22] This is well illustrated by a passage in *2 Henry the Fourth*, iv. 4: "Thou hidest a thousand daggers in thy thoughts, which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart."

[23] "Let justice be impeached or arraigned for suffering thee to live."

[24] The ancient philosopher of Samos, who is said to have taught the transmigration of souls. In *As You Like It*, iii. 2, Rosalind says, "I was never so berhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember." And in *Twelfth Night*, iv. 2, the Clown says to Malvolio, "Thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits; and fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam."

And, whilst thou lay'st with thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak[25] so loud:
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learnèd Doctor to our court. —
Where is he?

Neris. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. — Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place. —
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

[Clerk reads.] *Your Grace shall understand, that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick; but, in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthazar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turn'd o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, better'd with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation;*[26] *for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.*

[25] That is, *in speaking*. The infinitive used gerundively again.

[26] The meaning apparently is, "Let his youthfulness be no hindrance to his being reverently esteemed."

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the Doctor come.—

Enter PORTIA, *dressed like a Doctor of Laws.*

Give me your hand: came you from old Bellario?
Portia. I did, my lord.
Duke. You're welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question[27] in the court?
Portia. I am informèd throughly[28] of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?
Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.
Portia. Is your name Shylock?
Shy. Shylock is my name.
Portia. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn[29] you as you do proceed.—
[*To* ANTO.] You stand within his danger,[30] do you not?
Anto. Ay, so he says.
Portia. Do you confess the bond?
Anto. I do.
Portia. Then must the Jew be merciful.
Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

[27] "The *controversy* for the deciding of which the present *inquiry* or *investigation* is held." *Question* in its proper Latin sense.

[28] *Through* and *thorough* are but different forms of the same word; and Shakespeare uses the two forms indifferently, as suits his metre. The usage was common.

[29] To *impugn* is to *controvert*, to *oppose*; literally, to *fight against*.

[30] "Within one's danger" properly meant within one's power or control, liable to a penalty which he might impose. Sometimes, however, it was used for being *in debt to one*. Here the meaning seems to be. "Your life is in his power, and so in danger from him."

Portia. The quality of mercy is not strain'd;[31]
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:[32]
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest:[33] it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,[34]
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,—
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.[35] I have spoke thus much,

[31] That is, the nature of mercy is to act freely, not from constraint. Portia had used *must* in a moral sense, and the Jew purposely mistook it in a legal sense. This gives a natural occasion and impulse for her strain of "heavenly eloquence."

[32] A beautiful version of the divine Christian axiom, Acts xx. 35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

[33] This may mean, either that mercy exists in the greatest plenitude in Him who is omnipotent, or that the more power one has to inflict pain, the more he bows and subdues the heart by showing mercy. If the former, it should be printed "in the Mightiest." It was evidently a favourite idea with Shakespeare that the noblest and most amiable thing is power mixed with gentleness; and that the highest style of manhood is that which knows no fear of pain, but is a child to the touches of compassion.

[34] The *thing attributed* or *assigned* for the purpose of *inspiring* awe and of *symbolizing* majesty.

[35] "Portia, referring the Jew to the Christian doctrine of Salvation, and

To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow,[36] this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Portia. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender't for him in the court;
Yea, thrice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth.[37] And, I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong;
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Portia. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree establishéd:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent;
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the State. It cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel:—
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Portia. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend Doctor; here it is.

Portia. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

the Lord's Prayer, is a little out of character." So says Judge Blackstone; whereas the Lord's Prayer was itself but a compilation, all the petitions in it being taken out of the ancient euchologies or prayer-books of the Jews. So in Ecclesiasticus, xxviii. 2: "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest."

[36] "If you rigidly insist upon the plea of justice."

[37] *Truth* is *honesty* here. A *true* man in old language is an *honest* man. And the honesty here shown is in offering to pay thrice the money.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in Heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice!
Portia. Why, this bond is forfeit;[38]
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. — Be merciful;
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.
Anto. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.
Portia. Why, then thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife; —
Shy. O, noble judge! O, excellent young man!
Portia. — For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,[39]
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder[40] art thou than thy looks!
Portia. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

[38] *Forfeit* for *forfeited.* This shortened preterite has occurred more than once before. The Poet has many preterites similarly shortened. See page 127, note 4.

[39] That is, the law relating to contracts is fully applicable in this case.

[40] Such double comparatives are frequent. So we have *more better, more braver,* and many others. Good grammar then.

Shy. Ay, his breast
So says the bond: — doth it not, noble judge? —
Nearest his heart: those are the very words.
Portia. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?
Shy. I have them ready.[41]
Portia. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Portia. It is not so express'd; but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.
Shy. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.
Portia. Come, merchant, have you any thing to say?
Anto. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared. —
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use[42]
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;[43]
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge

[41] *Balance*, though singular in form, is used in a plural sense, referring to the *two scales* which make the balance. So in Baret's *Alvearie*, 1580: "Balances, or a payre of *ballance*."

[42] It is *ever* her *custom* or *wont*. *Still* and *use* in these senses occur very often. The usage was common.

[43] "Speak well of me when I am dead"; or, perhaps, "Tell the world that I died like a man."

Whether Bassanio had not once a lover.
Repent not you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.[44]

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which[45] is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Portia. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Grati. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in Heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Neris. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make, else, an unquiet house.

Shy. [*Aside.*] These be the Christian husbands! I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Bárrabas[46]
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!—
[*To* PORTIA.] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Portia. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shy. Most rightful judge!

[44] An equivoque on *heart*; and it rather heightens the pathos.

[45] *Which* and *who* were used indifferently, both of persons and things. So in the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father *which* art in Heaven."

[46] Shakespeare seems to have followed the pronunciation usual in the theatre, *Barabbas* being sounded *Barubas* throughout Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.

Portia. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learnèd Judge! A sentence! — Come, prepare.

Portia. Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are, a pound of flesh:
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are by the laws of Venice confiscate
Unto the State of Venice.

Grati. O upright judge! — Mark, Jew: O learnèd judge!

Shy. Is that the law?

Portia. Thyself shalt see the Act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Grati. O learned judge! — Mark, Jew: a learnèd judge!

Shy. I take his offer, then; — pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Portia. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Grati. O Jew, an upright judge, a learnèd judge!

Portia. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou takest more
Or less than a just pound,[47] — be't but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part

[47] An *exact* pound: the same as "just a pound."

Of one poor scruple ; nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair, —
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.[48]
Grati. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew !
Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.
Portia. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.
Bass. I have it ready for thee ; here it is.
Portia. He hath refused it in the open court :
He shall have merely justice and his bond.
Grati. A Daniel, still say I ; a second Daniel ! —
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?
Portia. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shy. Why, then the Devil give him good of it !
I'll stay no longer question.
Portia. Tarry, Jew :
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods ; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the State ;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament I say thou stand'st ;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,

[48] Another shortened preterite. So the Poet has *consecrate dedicate, suffocate, situate*, and others.

That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formally by me rehearsed.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

Grati. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the State,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the State's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general State,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.[49]

Portia. Ay, for the State; not for Antonio.[50]

Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Portia. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Grati. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

Anto. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine[51] for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman

[49] "Submission on your part may move me to reduce it to a fine."

[50] Meaning, apparently, that the reduction of the forfeiture to a fine should apply only to that half of his goods which was to come to the coffer of the State, not that which fell to Antonio.

[51] If the court will *remit* the fine, or *acquit* Shylock of the forfeiture so far as the claim of the State is concerned. The Poet repeatedly uses *quit* thus for *acquit* or *release*

That lately stole his daughter:[52]
Two things provided more: That, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this; or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronouncèd here.

Portia. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy. I am content.

Portia. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Grati. In christening thou shalt have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,[53]
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [*Exit* SHYLOCK.

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Portia. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon:[54]

[52] "That is, in trust for Shylock during his life, for the purpose of securing it at his death to Lorenzo. In conveyances of land, where it is intended to give the estate to any person after the death of another, it is necessary that a third person should be possessed of the estate, and the *use* be declared to the one after the death of the other, or the estate would be rendered insecure to the future possessor. This is called a conveyance to *uses*." The anonymous author of the foregoing adds, that Shakespeare has rendered the old Latin law phrase pertaining to the case, "with all the strictness of a technical conveyancer, and has made Antonio desire to have one half of Shylock's goods in *use*, — to render it upon his death to Lorenzo."

[53] Meaning a jury of *twelve* men to condemn him. This appears to have been an old joke. So in *The Devil is an Ass*, by Ben Jonson: "I will leave you to your godfathers in law. Let *twelve men* work."

[54] An old English idiom now obsolete. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 1: "I shall desire you of more acquaintance."

I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I'm sorry that your leisure serves you not. —
Antonio, gratify this gentleman;
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt* DUKE, Magnificoes, *and Train.*

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,[55]
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope[56] your courteous pains withal.

Anto. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

Portia. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you, —
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Portia. You press me far, and therefore I will yield. —
[*To* ANTO.] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake; —

[55] In *return for* which, or *in consideration of* which. So the phrase is, I think, always used in Shakespeare. Now it means *instead of.*

[56] The only instance I have met with of *cope* being used in the sense of *requite.* A like use of the word in composition, however, occurs in Ben Jonson's *Fox*, iii. 5: —

> He would have sold his part of Paradise
> For ready money, had he met a *cope-man.*

[*To* BASS.] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand: I'll take no more;
And you in love shall[57] not deny me this.

Bass. This ring, good sir, — alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Portia. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Portia. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And, when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

Portia. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if[58] your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved this ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt* PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

Anto. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings, and my love withal,
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.[59]

[57] *Shall*, again, where we should use will. See page 147, note 33.

[58] *An if* is an old reduplication, with the sense merely of *if*. So the old writers use *an*, or *if*, or *an if*, indifferently.

[59] *Commandment* is properly four syllables here, as if written *commande-ment*. And so, in fact, it is spelt in the old copies. Perhaps the old spelling should in such cases be retained.

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him ;
Give him the ring ; and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house. Away ! make haste. —
[*Exit* GRATIANO.
Come, you and I will thither presently ;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont : come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *The Same. A Street.*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA, *disguised as before.*

Portia. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed,
And let him sign it : we'll away to-night,
And be a day before our husbands home.
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO.

Grati. Fair sir, you are well overta'en :
My lord Bassanio, upon more advice,[1]
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.
Portia. That cannot be :
His ring I do accept most thankfully ;
And so, I pray you, tell him : furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Grati. That will I do.
Neris. Sir, I would speak with you. —
[*To* PORTIA.] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

[1] Upon *further consideration*. See page 87, note 33. And so in *Henry the Fifth*, ii. 2: "It was excess of wine that set him on; and, on our *more advice*, we pardon him."

Portia. Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old[2] swearing
That they did give away the rings to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.

Neris. Come, good sir; will you show me to this house? 5

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Belmont. Avenue to* PORTIA'S *House.*

Enter LORENZO *and* JESSICA.

Loren. The Moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise, — in such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
And sigh'd his soul toward[1] the Grecian tents, 10
Where Cressid lay that night.[2]

[2] *Old* was a frequent intensive in colloquial speech; very much as *huge* is used now. So in *Much Ado about Nothing*, v. 2: "Yonder's *old* coil at home." And in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, i. 4: "Here will be an *old* abusing of God's patience and the king's English."

[1] *Toward*, like many other words, is, with the poets, one or two syllables according to the occasions of their metre. Here it is two, with the accent on the second. At the end of iv. 1, it has the accent on the first: —

> And in the morning early will we both
> Fly *toward* Belmont: come, Antonio.

[2] The story of Troilus and Cressida is dramatized in Shakespeare's play of that name. Troilus was a Trojan prince, one of King Priam's fifty sons. He fell deeply and most honourably in love with Cressida, who, after being mighty sweet upon him, forsook him for his enemy, Diomedes the Greek; which he took to heart prodigiously.

Jess. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,[3]
And ran dismay'd away.

Loren. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow[4] in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jess. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.[5]

[3] That is, ere she saw the lion himself. The story of "Pyramus and his love Thisbe" is burlesqued in the interlude of Bottom and company in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

[4] Spenser in like sort makes the willow a symbol of forsaken love. So in *The Færie Queene*, i. 1, 9: "The willow, worne of forlorne paramours." Dido was Queen of Carthage. After the destruction of Troy, Æneas, a great Trojan prince, in the course of his wanderings landed at Carthage, where he was received and treated with all possible kindness and honour by the Queen. He was a splendid fellow, and she got desperately smitten with him. After thus winning her heart entirely, he jilted her, and ran away, alleging that the gods peremptorily commanded him to go and found a new nation: accordingly he became the founder of Rome.

[5] Twice before in this play we have had allusions to the story of Jason and his voyage to Colchos in quest of the golden fleece. Medea, daughter to the King of Colchos, fell in love with him, helped him to win the fleece, then stole her father's treasure, and ran away with Jason to Greece. Now Jason's father was very old and decayed; and Medea was a potent enchantress, the most so of all the ancient girls: so, with "the hidden power of herbs and might of magic spell," she made a most plenipotent broth, wherewith she renewed the old man's youth. Ovid has it, that she did this by drawing the blood out of his veins, and filling them with the broth. Burke, in the following passage, seems to infer that she put him into the kettle, and boiled him into a young man: "We are taught to look with horror on the children of their country, who are rashly prompt to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father's life." — *Reflections*, &c.

Loren. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an únthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jess. And in such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

Loren. And in such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jess. I would out-night you, did nobody come:
But, hark! I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Loren. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

Steph. A friend.

Loren. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

Steph. Stephano is my name;[6] and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.[7]

Loren. Who comes with her?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.

[6] In this play the name *Stephano* has the accent on the second syllable, In *The Tempest*, written some years later, the same name has it, rightly, on the first.

[7] In old times crosses were set up at the intersection of roads, and in other places specially associated with saintly or heroic names, to invite the passers-by to devotion. And in those days Christians were much in the habit of remembering in their prayers whatever lay nearest their hearts.

I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

Loren. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—
But go we in,[8] I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Sola, sola! wo, ha, ho! sola, sola!

Loren. Who calls?

Laun. Sola!—did you see Master Lorenzo and Mistress Lorenzo?—sola, sola!

Loren. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola!—Where? where?

Loren. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news:[9] my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*

Loren. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in?—
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.— [*Exit* STEPHANO.
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music

[8] Here we have a clear instance of the first person plural, in the imperative. The Poet has many such. So in *Hamlet*, i. 1: "Well, *sit we* down, and *let us hear* Bernardo speak of this." And again: "*Break we* our watch up."

[9] The postman used to carry a horn, and blow it to give notice of his coming, on approaching a place where he had something to deliver. Launcelot has just been imitating the notes of the horn in his exclamations, *Sola*, &c.—*Expect*, in the next line, is *wait for* or *await*. The Poet has it repeatedly in that sense. And so in Hebrews, x. 13: "From henceforth *expecting* till his enemies be made his footstool."

Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of Heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines [10] of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring [11] to the young-eyed cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls; [12]
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.—

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jess. I'm never merry when I hear sweet music.

Loren. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

[10] A small plate, used in the administration of the Eucharist: it was commonly of gold, or silver-gilt.

[11] Continually sounding an accompaniment.— Of course everybody has heard of "the music of the spheres,"— an ancient mystery which taught that the heavenly bodies in their revolutions sing together in a concert so loud, various, and sweet, as to exceed all proportion to the human ear. And the greatest souls, from Plato to Wordsworth, have been lifted above themselves, with the idea that the universe was knit together by a principle of which musical harmony is the aptest and clearest expression. Milton touches it with surpassing sweetness in the morning hymn of Adam and Eve, *Paradise Lost*, v. 177: "And ye five other wandering fires, that move in mystic dance not without song, resound His praise," &c. See, also, Milton's *Arcades*, and Coleridge's *Remorse*, Act iii. scene 1, and Wordsworth's great poem *On the Power of Sound*, stanza xii.

[12] So in Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. 38: "Touching musical harmony, such is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have thereby been induced to think that *the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony*.

Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus: [13]
Let no such man be trusted.[14] Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA *at a distance.*

Portia. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

[13] *Erebus* was the darkest and gloomiest region of Hades.

[14] Upon the general subject of this splendid strain touching music and musical harmony, it seems but just to quote a passage hardly inferior from Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici;* Part ii. Sect. 9: "There is a music wherever there is harmony, order, or proportion; and thus far we may maintain 'the music of the spheres': for those well-ordered motions and regular paces, though they give no sound unto the ear, yet to the understanding they strike a note most full of harmony. Whatsoever is harmonically composed delights in harmony; which makes me much distrust the symmetry of those heads which declaim against all church-music. For myself, not only from my obedience but my particular genius I do embrace it: for even that vulgar and tavern music which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of

Neris. When the Moon shone we did not see the candle.

Portia. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king,
Until a king be by; and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook,
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

Neris. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Portia. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:[15]
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Neris. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Portia. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither is attended; and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.[16]

the first Composer. There is something in it of divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world and creatures of God, — such a melody to the ear as the whole world, well understood, would afford the understanding. In brief, it is a sensible fit of that harmony which intellectually sounds in the ear of God. I will not say, with Plato, the soul is an harmony, but harmonical, and hath its nearest sympathy unto music."

[15] Nothing is good unless it be *regarded*, *heeded*, or *attended to*. Hence the music sounds much better when there is nothing to distract or divert the attention.

[16] "The difference is in the hearer's mind, and not in the songs themselves; and the nightingale is reputed the first of songsters because she sings at the time when she can best be heard." We have a like thought in the Poet's 102d Sonnet: —

> Our love was new, and then but in the Spring,
> When I was wont to greet it in my lays;
> As Philomel in Summer's front doth sing,
> And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
> Not that the Summer is less pleasant now
> Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night;
> But that wild music burdens every bough,
> And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.

How many things by season season'd[17] are
To their right praise and true perfection! —
Peace, ho! the Moon sleeps with Endymion,
And would not be awaked![18] [*Music ceases.*

Loren. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Portia. He knows me, as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

Loren. Dear lady, welcome home.

Portia. We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Loren. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

Portia. Go in, Nerissa:
Give order to my servants that they take

[17] A rather unpleasant jingle in *season* and *season'd*. The meaning is, that, by being rightly *timed*, the things are tempered and made fit for their purpose; hence *relished*.

[18] Endymion was a very beautiful youth: Juno took a fancy to him, whereupon Jupiter grew jealous of him, and cast him into a perpetual sleep on Mount Latmos. While he was there asleep, Luna got so smitten with his beauty, that she used to come down and kiss him, and lie by his side. Some said, however, that Luna herself put him asleep, that she might have the pleasure of kissing him without his knowing it, the youth being somewhat shy when awake. The story was naturally a favourite with the poets. Fletcher, in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, tells the tale charmingly, —

> How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
> First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
> She took eternal fire that never dies;
> How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
> His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
> Head of old Latmus, where she stoops each night,
> Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
> To kiss her sweetest.

No note at all of our being absent hence ; —
Nor you, Lorenzo ; — Jessica, nor you. [*A Tucket*[19] *sounds.*

Loren. Your husband is at hand ; I hear his trumpet :
We are no tell-tales, madam ; fear you not.

Portia. This night, methinks, is but the daylight sick ;
It looks a little paler : 'tis a day,
Such as a day is when the Sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, *and their Followers.*

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,[20]
If you would walk in absence of the Sun.

Portia. Let me give light, but let me not be light ;[21]
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me :
But God sort all ![22] You're welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend :
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Portia. You should in all sense[23] be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Anto. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Portia. Sir, you are very welcome to our house :

[19] A *tucket* is a peculiar series of notes on a trumpet. Probably the word is from the Italian *toccata*, which is said to mean a prelude to a sonata.

[20] This is making Portia pretty luminous or radiant. To "hold day with the Antipodes" is to have day at the same time with them. But Bassanio is deep in love with Portia : and so am I. Who is not ?

[21] Twice before in these scenes, we had had playing upon *light :* here it is especially graceful and happy. See page 142, note 18.

[22] *Sort* here has the sense of the Latin *sortior :* "God *allot* all," or *dispose* all.

[23] Is *sense* used for *reason* here ? So it would seem. Or does it mean in all *feeling* or *sensibility?* Perhaps *all sense* is put for *every sense* or *all senses.*

It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.[24]

Grati. [*To* NERIS.] By yonder Moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

Portia. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

Grati. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give to me; whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife,[25] *Love me, and leave me not.*

Neris. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death;
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective,[26] and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge!
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

Grati. He will, an if he live to be a man.

Neris. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Grati. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy; a little scrubbed[27] boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk;

[24] This complimentary form, made up only of *breath*.

[25] Knives were formerly inscribed, by means of *aqua fortis*, with short sentences in distich. The *posy* of a ring was the motto.

[26] *Respective* is *considerate* or *regardful;* in the same sense as *respect* is explained, page 83, note 20. The word is repeatedly used thus by Shakespeare; as in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 1: "Away to Heaven *respective* lenity, and fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!"

[27] *Scrubbed* is here used in the sense of *stunted;* as in Holland's Pliny: "Such will never prove fair trees, but *scrubs* only." And Verplanck observes that the name *scrub oak* was from the first settlement of this country given to the dwarf or bush oak.

A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Portia. You were to blame — I must be plain with you —
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,
And riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring, and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands:
I dare be sworn for him, he would not leave it,
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too ünkind cause of grief:
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

Bass. [*Aside.*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off,
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Grati. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine:
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Portia. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it, — it is gone.

Portia. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By Heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring.

Neris. Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

Bass. Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
Portia. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain[28] the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't, but some woman had the ring.
Bass. No, by mine honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it; but a Civil Doctor,[29]
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him:
I was beset with shame and courtesy;[30]

[28] *Contain* was sometimes used in the sense of *retain*. So in Bacon's *Essays:* "To *containe* anger from mischiefe, though it take hold of a man, there be two things."

[29] A *Civil Doctor* is a doctor of the Civil Law.

[30] "Shame and courtesy" is here put for *shame of discourtesy*. The Poet has several like expressions. In *King Lear*, i. 2: "This policy and reverence of age"; which means "This policy, or custom, *of reverencing* age." Also in i. 5: "This milky *gentleness and* course of yours"; that is, milky *and*

My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessèd candles of the night,[31]
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy Doctor.

Portia. Let not that Doctor e'er come near my house.
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you:
I'll not deny him any thing I have.

Neris. Nor I his clerk; therefore be well advised[32]
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Grati. Well, do you so: let not me take him then;
For, if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

Anto. I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Portia. Sir, grieve not you; you're welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforcèd wrong;
And in the hearing of these many friends
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself,—

Portia. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
In each eye, one: — swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit!

Bass. Nay, but hear me:

gentle course. And *Hamlet*, i. 1: "Well ratified by law *and* heraldry"; meaning the law *of* heraldry.

[31] The "candles of the night" are the Moon and stars. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5: "Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day stand tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops."

[32] *Advised*, as before, for *cautious* or *circumspect*. See page 87, note 33. — *Well*, here, has the force of *very*.

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
Anto. I once did lend my body for his wealth ;[33]
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried : I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.[34]
Portia. Then you shall be his surety : give him this ;
And bid him keep it better than the other.
Anto. Here, Lord Bassanio ; swear to keep this ring.
Bass. By Heaven, it is the same I gave the Doctor !
Portia. I had it of him ; pardon me, Bassanio.
Neris. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano.
Grati. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In Summer, when the ways are fair enough.
Portia. You are all amazed :
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure ;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario :
There you shall find that Portia was the Doctor ;
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd ; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. — Antonio, you are welcome ;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect : unseal this letter soon ;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly.[35]

[33] That is, for his *welfare* or his *good*. *Wealth* is only another form of *weal :* we say indifferently common-*weal* or common-*wealth ;* and the commonwealth is the good that men have in common. — *Which*, in the next line, refers to the *loan* of Antonio's body.

[34] *Advisedly* is *deliberately ;* much the same as in note 32.

[35] *Suddenly* for *unexpectedly ;* as in the *Litany* we pray to be delivered from "*sudden* death."

You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancèd on this letter.

Anto. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the Doctor, and I knew you not?

Anto. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;[36]
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.[37]

Portia. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Neris. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. —
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

Loren. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starvèd people.

Portia. It is almost morning,
And yet I'm sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,[38]
And we will answer all things faithfully.

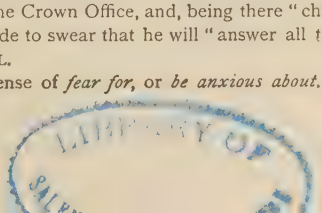
Grati. Well, while I live, I'll fear[39] no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

[36] Life and the *means of living*. Portia has given Antonio *life* in delivering him from the clutches of Shylock.

[37] For some comment on this part of the scene, see the Introduction, page 75.

[38] In the Court of Queen's Bench, when a complaint is made against a person for a "contempt," the practice is that, before sentence is finally pronounced, he is sent into the Crown Office, and, being there "charged upon interrogatories," he is made to swear that he will "answer all things faithfully." — LORD CAMPBELL.

[39] *Fear*, again, in the sense of *fear for*, or *be anxious about*. See page 157, note 1.



CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 80. **Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood.** — The old copies have "burghers *on* the flood." Corrected by Steevens. See the quotation from *As You Like It*, in foot-note 5.

P. 81. **And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand.** — So Rowe. The old copies have "Andrew *docks* in sand." Hardly worth noting.

P. 82. *Salar.* **Why, then you are in love.**
Anto. **Fie, fie!** — So the old copies, leaving the verse defective. Dyce says, "I have little doubt that Shakespeare wrote '*In love!* fie, fie!'"

P. 84. **Who, I'm very sure,**
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears, &c. — Instead of *who*, the old copies have *when*, leaving *would damn* without a subject. Collier's second folio retains *when*, and changes *would* to '*twould*, which Dyce adopts. The correction of *when* to *who* was made by Rowe.

P. 85. **Is that any thing now?** — The old copies read "*It* is that any thing now." Hardly deserving of notice, but that Collier retains the old reading, and attempts to explain it.

P. 87. **I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,**
That which I owe is lost. — Instead of *wilful*, Warburton proposed *witless*, and Collier's second folio has *wasteful*. The latter is a plausible change.

ACT I., SCENE II.

P. 89. **It is no small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.** — So the folio. The quartos have "no *mean* happiness." I prefer to be without the jingle of *mean* and *mean*.

P. 90. **Will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love.** — So the first quarto has the latter clause. The other old copies read "who *you* shall rightly love."

P. 90. **And he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.** — Collier's second folio reads "*approbation of* his own good parts." Shakespeare has no other instance of *appropriation;* but he uses *approbation* for *proof;* and in that sense the word certainly accords well with the context.

P. 91. **If a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering.** — The old copies have *Trassell* for *throstle*. Is *trassell* an old form of *throstle?* Probably *th* was sounded like *t*, in the latter word, and, in the former, *a* as in *what* or in *chap:* so that *trassell* and *trostle* would be but putting different letters for the same sound.

P. 92. **What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?** — So the quartos. The folio substitutes *other* for *Scottish;* doubtless on account of King James. It may be worth noting that Collier's second folio substitutes *Irish* for *other*.

ACT I., SCENE III.

P. 95. **There be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves, — I mean pirates.** — So Collier's second folio; the old copies, "*water theeves*, and *land theeves*"; which would naturally mean that the *land*-thieves were pirates.

P. 97. **Is he yet possess'd**
How much we would. — One of the quartos and the folio read "How much *he* would"; the other quarto, "How much *ye* would." The correction is Walker's.

P. 98. **Was this inserted to make interest good?** — Collier's second folio substitutes *inferrèd* for *inserted.* The Poet uses *infer* for *bring in* or *introduce*, and that meaning fits the context well. See foot-note 15.

P. 98. **A goodly apple rotten at the heart:**

O, what a godly outside falsehood hath! — So Rowe and Walker. Instead of *godly*, the old copies have *goodly*, the word having probably been repeated by mistake from the preceding line. And Walker remarks that "*goodly* and *godly*, and, in like manner, *good* and *God*, have been confounded in various passages of our old writers."

P. 101. **Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect.** — So the second folio. The originals have "hard *dealings* teaches." Confusion of singulars and plurals is among the commonest misprints.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 102. **The shadow'd livery of the burning Sun.** — So Collier's second folio; the old copies, "the *burnisht* Sun." Modern editions print "*burnish'd* Sun," but the epithet is surely an odd one, to say the least.

P. 103. **But, if my father had not scanted me,**

And hedged me by his will. — The old copies read "by his *wit*"; and *wit* has been explained "sagacity and power of mind." The word was indeed used in a way to include that meaning; but *wit* is here undoubtedly a misprint for *will*, which was often written *wil.* The change is approved by several expressions used in i. 2: "Curb'd by the *will* of a dead father;" and "perform your father's *will;*" and "by the manner of my father's *will.*" Corrected by Capell.

ACT II., SCENE II.

P. 108. **Do you not know me, father?** — Here *not* is wanting in the old copies, but is indispensable to the sense of the passage. Supplied by Dyce.

P. 112. **Nay, you must not deny me: I must go**
With you to Belmont. — The old copies print this speech as prose, and are without *Nay* at the beginning of it. But the speech was clearly meant to be verse, and *Nay* completes it as such. It was added by Hanmer and Capell.

ACT II., SCENE IV.

P. 115. **And whiter than the paper that it writ on**
Is the fair hand that writ. — So Hanmer. In the first line, *that* is wanting in the old copies, and is fairly required for the verse.

ACT II., SCENE V.

P. 118. **Go you before me, sirrah;**
Say, I will come.
Laun. **I'll go before you, sir.** — So Walker. The old copies read "*I will* go before, sir." Hanmer rectified the metre by printing "*Sir*, I will go before."

P. 119. **How like a younker or a prodigal.** — So Rowe. Instead of *younker*, the old copies have *younger;* a palpable misprint.

P. 120. **I'll watch as long for you then. Come, approach.** — *Come* is Pope's insertion; justifiable, probably, on the score of metre. I suspect that Ritson was right in proposing to read "*I'll* watch as long for you. — Come, then, approach."

ACT II., SCENE VI.

P. 125. **Gilded tombs do worms infold.** — So Johnson and Collier's second folio; the old copies, "Gilded *timber* doe," &c.

ACT II., SCENE VII.

P. 127. **And even then, his eye being big with tears.** — Instead of *then*, the old copies have *there;* doubtless repeated by mistake from the line before. Corrected by Dyce.

ACT II., SCENE VIII.

P. 130. **I will assume desert. — Give me a key,**

And instantly unlock my fortunes here. — The old copies read "Give me a key *for this*, And instantly," &c. As the words *for this* are plainly superfluous both for sense and for metre, and as Hanmer, Ritson, Steevens, and Dyce concur in thinking them an interpolation, I have struck them out.

P. 131. **So be gone, sir; you are sped.** — So the second folio; the earlier editions omit *sir*.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 136. **Good news, good news! ha, ha! — Where? in Genoa?** — Instead of *where*, the old copies have *here*. Evidently wrong. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT III., SCENE II.

P. 139. **There may as well be amity and league**

'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love. — So Walker. The old text has "amity and *life*." The latter is certainly a strange word for the place, and is made still more unfitting by what the same speaker says a little after, — "Promise me *life*," &c.

P. 140. **How begot, how nourishéd?** [*Reply.*

It is engender'd in the eyes, &c. — So Hanmer and Johnson, following the old editions, all of which, both quarto and folio, print *Reply* in the margin, and in the same line with "*How begot*," &c. Other modern editions, generally, print "Reply, reply" in a separate line, between the two lines here quoted, and thus make it a part of the song itself. It is true, the old copies repeat the word, "*Replie, replie*"; but the word was evidently meant as a stage-direction. And it seemed to me that so the arrangement ought to be, long before I knew the printing of the old copies. Perhaps I ought to add that, in the second line, the quartos have *eye* instead of *eyes*, the reading of the folios.

P. 141. **There is no vice so simple, but assumes**
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts. — So the second folio. It is well-nigh superfluous to note that, instead of *vice*, the originals have *voice;* which is readily corrected from *virtue* in the next line.

P. 141. **How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false**
As stayers of sand, wear yet upon their chins, &c. — So the folio. Modern editions generally print *stairs;* for what reason, or with what propriety, is, I think, not very apparent: for, surely, *stayers*, in the sense of *props*, *supports*, or *stays*, agrees much better with the context. And in most other places, if not in all, the folio has *stairs* spelt *staires*.

P. 142. **Thus ornament is but the guilèd shore**
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian feature; in a word,
The seeming truth, &c. — Instead of "*guilèd* shore," which is the reading of the quartos and the first folio, the second folio has "*guilded* shore." This is merely an old way of spelling *gilded*, which is Rowe's reading. I am apt to think that so we ought to read. Lettsom has "little doubt that the Poet was thinking of Raleigh's 'Discovery of Guiana,' and wrote *guilded*." See, however, foot-note 21. — In the third line, the old editions read "Vailing an Indian *beautie;* in a word," &c. With this reading I believe all modern editors are dissatisfied, as indeed they well may be. Hanmer reads "Indian *dowdy*," and Walker conjectures "Indian *gipsy*." Collier's second folio undertakes to heal the difficulty by changing the punctuation, thus: "Veiling an Indian: beauty, in a word," &c. But the corruption is in the word *beauty*, which clearly has no business there, and probably crept in by a sort of contagion from *beauteous* in the preceding line. The Cambridge Editors propose "Indian *beldam*"; which seems to me well worth considering. Lettsom conjectured *favour*, which suggested to me the reading in the text. After having settled upon *feature*, I was glad to find that Mr. Spedding had anticipated me in that conjecture. It has some advantage over the others in the *ductus literarum*, as it involves a substitution of only two letters. And Shakespeare repeatedly uses *feature* in a sense well suited to the place. See foot-note 22.

P. 143. **Nor none of thee, thou stale and common drudge**
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence. — Here the old copies have *pale* instead of *stale*, and *paleness* instead of *plainness*. *Stale* is Farmer's correction; and Dyce, who adopts it, remarks that the two words "are frequently confounded by early transcribers and printers." We have *stale* coupled with *common* in *1 Henry IV.*, iii. 2: "So *common*-hackney'd in the eyes of men, so *stale* and cheap to vulgar company." — Warburton changed *paleness* to *plainness*, which Staunton adopts, with the just remark, that "the *plainness*, which moves Bassanio *more than eloquence*, is the plain speaking of the inscription on the leaden coffer, contrasted with the tempting labels of its neighbours."

P. 145. **But the full sum of me**
Is sum of — something. — Instead of *something*, which is the reading of the quartos, the folio has *nothing*. The latter, though generally preferred, savours, I think, rather too much of affectation of humility to accord well with Portia's character. Besides, she seems to be playing with the likeness of sound in *sum* and *some*.

P. 145. **Happy in this, she is not yet so old**
But she may learn; then happier in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours, &c. — In the old copies, the second of these lines stands thus: "But she may learne: happier then this"; which leaves both sense and metre defective. — In the fourth line, again, the old copies have *is* instead of *in*, which is the reading of Collier's second folio. The phrase *in that* for *inasmuch as* is often used by the Poet.

P. 147. **What, and my old Venetian friend Solanio.** — Here the old copies introduce, for the first time, a new name, *Salerio;* but the person is clearly the same who appears in the first scene of the play under the name of *Solanio*, and as the common friend of Antonio, Bassanio, and Salarino. In fact, the old copies present a strange

confusion in regard to two of the names: *Salarino, Slarino; Solanio, Salanio, Salino, Salerio.* I therefore concur with Staunton and Dyce in substituting *Solanio* for *Salerio* wherever the latter occurs in this scene.

P. 149. **And I must have the half of any thing**
That this same paper brings you. — The old copies read "And I must *freely* have"; a redundancy both in sense and in metre. The word *freely* occurs five lines after; hence, probably, it crept in here out of place. Corrected by Pope.

P. 151. **Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.** — So the second folio. The other old copies are without *my*. To cure this defect in the metre, some editors change *through* to *thorough*, which is indeed but another form of the same word, and is often used by Shakespeare.

ACT III., SCENE III.

P. 153. **The Duke cannot deny the course of law,**
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice: if it be denied,
'Twill much impeach the justice, &c. — So Capell, who is followed by Staunton. The old copies set a (:) after *law*, print *Will* instead of *'Twill:* and so make *commodity* the subject of *will impeach*. This greatly obscures, if it does not quite defeat, the meaning of the passage. Staunton aptly notes that, without the second line, "the passage is perfectly logical and easy." See foot-note 3.

ACT III., SCENE IV.

P. 156. **And use thou all th' endeavour of a man**
In speed to Padua. — *Mantua* in the old copies; but *Padua* is spoken of repeatedly as the residence of Bellario.

ACT III., SCENE V.

P. 160. **He finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth;**
And if on Earth he do not merit it,
In reason he should never come to Heaven. — Here the old copies present a remarkable variety of readings. Instead of *merit it,* one of the quartos has *meane it, then;* the other, *meane it, it;* which latter the folio repeats, merely changing *In* to *Is* at the beginning of the next line. The reading in the text is Pope's. And it appears that Walker, without knowing of Pope's correction, hit upon the same as regards *merit it,* though he proposed to substitute "*'Tis* reason" for "*In* reason."

ACT IV., SCENE I.

P. 163. **And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,**
Cannot contain themselves for affection.
Masters of passion sway it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. — So the old copies, except that they have *swayes* instead of *sway.* The more common reading, which was first proposed by Thirlby, sets a (:) after *themselves,* changes *Masters* to *Master,* and puts it in apposition with *affection,* and makes *affection* the subject of *sways.* But it is not altogether clear to me how, or in what sense, affection may be said to be the master of passion. Then too, in Thirlby's reading, I am something at a loss what the second *it* refers to, whether to *affection* or to *passion.* The old reading, with the simple change of *sways* to *sway,* leaves no doubt on that point; and, if we take *affection* in the sense the Poet elsewhere uses it in, gives an apt and natural meaning; for it is strictly true that masters of passion do sway it, that is, passion, to the mood of its own predispositions. See foot-notes 15 and 16.

P. 163. **Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;**
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a wauling bag-pipe. — The old editions read "a *woollen* bag-pipe." It has been urged, in defence of this reading, that bag-pipes were wont to be carried or kept in woollen cases: so were

fiddles; but this would hardly make it proper, or even sense, to speak of them as woollen fiddles. Johnson proposed *wooden*, and Sir John Hawkins *swollen;* which latter Steevens adopted, and is Singer's reading. Collier's second folio has *bollen*, which is an old word meaning about the same as *swollen;* and Dyce adopts that reading. *Wauling* is Capell's happy conjecture; and it is remarkable that, in our own day, both Dr. Ingleby and Mr. A. E. Brae, each independently of the other, and without being aware of Capell's conjecture, hit upon the same correction. Mason aptly notes that "it is not by the sight of the bag-pipe that the persons alluded to are affected, but by the sound."

P. 166. **To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.** — The old copies have *forfeiture* instead of *forfeit*. *Forfeiture* overfills the verse. The correction was made by Rowe, and was also proposed by Ritson. This scene has *forfeit* repeatedly in the sense of *forfeiture*.

P. 166. **O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog.** — The old copies read "*inexecrable* dog"; which some approve, taking the prepositive *in* as intensive. *Inexorable* in the third folio.

P. 170. **Yes, here I tender't for him in the court;**
Yea, thrice the sum. — The old copies here read "Yea, *twice* the summe." But it appears, from two statements of the same point afterwards, that *thrice* is the right word.

P. 172. **From which lingering penance**
Of such a misery doth she cut me off. — So the second folio. The earlier editions read "Of such misery," omitting the *a*. Jervis proposes "Of such-*like* misery"; Lettsom, "*And searching* misery."

P. 173. **Whether Bassanio had not once a lover.** — The old copies have "once a *love*." *Lover* was continually used for *friend*, and this play has it repeatedly so; but *love*, I think, was never used in that sense.

P. 174. **I take his offer, then.** — *This* instead of *his* in the old copies. The two words were very often misprinted for each other. Corrected by Capell.

P. 176. **And thou hast incurr'd**
The danger formally by me rehearsed. — So Hanmer. Instead of *formally*, the old copies have *formorly* and *formerly*.

ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 183. *Jess.* **And in such a night**
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well. —
Loren. **And in such a night**
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew, &c. — So some copies of the second folio. The *And* at the beginning of both speeches is wanting in the other old editions.

P. 184. *Loren.* **Sweet soul, let's in.** — In the old copies the words *Sweet soul* are made the conclusion of Launcelot's preceding speech. Corrected by Malone.

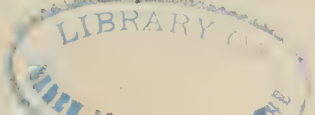
P. 188. **Peace, ho! the Moon sleeps with Endymion.** — The old copies have "Peace, *how* the Moone sleepes." The misprint of *how* for *ho* or *hoa* occurs repeatedly. The correction is Malone's.

P. 190. **That she did give to me; whose posy was**
For all the world like cutler's poetry. — So Collier's second folio. The old text reads "did give me," omitting *to*, and so leaving the metre defective.

P. 191. **And riveted with faith unto your flesh.** — "And *so* riveted" in the old copies; the *so* having probably crept in here by mistake from the second line before.

P. 191. **You give your wife too ûnkind cause of grief.** — So Walker. The old copies have "too unkind *a* cause." Such interpolations of *a* are very frequent, as Walker abundantly shows.

P. 194. **In Summer, when the ways are fair enough.** — So Collier's second folio. The old copies have *where* instead of *when*.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